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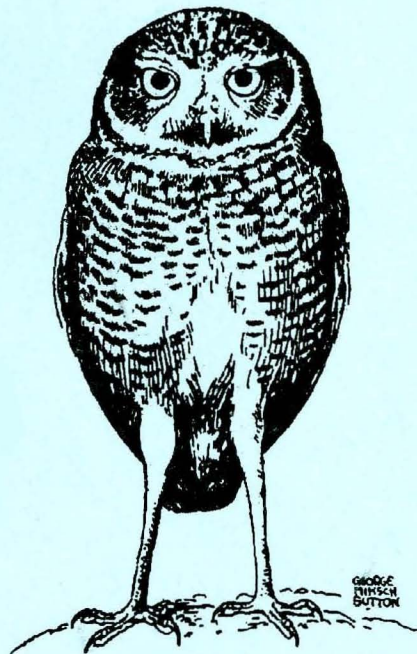
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# ***The Nebraska Bird Review***

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## SPRING FIELD REPORT, Mar 2014 to May 2014

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## INTRODUCTION

This spring period was generally uneventful for most species groups, but there were two major influxes in the east that were likely unprecedented in the memories of most Nebraska ornithologists. First was a major influx of gulls of 10 species at Carter Lake and N.P. Dodge Park in Omaha, including good numbers of California and Thayer's Gulls, as well as Iceland, and most surprisingly, a Glaucous-winged Gull. A bit later in the season was a strong influx of the rarer migrant warblers, such as Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Hooded, Cape May, Bay-breasted, and Black-throated Blue. For spice there was a Worm-eating Warbler and a Prairie Warbler, along with a surprising multi-bird eastern showing of Yellow-breasted Chats. While we're talking about warblers, mention should be made of the interesting study of Louisiana Waterthrushes along Stone Creek in Platte River State Park by John Carlini and Shari Schwartz, which has been ongoing for about 3 years.

Apart from the Glaucous-winged Gull, the rarest report was the female Broad-tailed Hummingbird photographed at a feeder in Dawes Co for the first documented spring record for the species. A pair of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds was there also, remaining through the period. A series of hummer sightings at a Scotts Bluff County feeder had to be of interest, as any spring hummer in the west would be a good find; Ruby-throated is perhaps most likely (which is saying something), but Black-chinned has become a distinct possibility, too.

Wayne Mollhoff is legendary in our state for his work on breeding birds and his two atlas projects, but he might have topped it all by placing a nest box in prime Saw-whet Owl habitat and after a couple of years of waiting patiently, having great success with at least one young bird fledged, for Nebraska's first documented breeding record.

Birding is beset with the well-known "that could have been a \_\_\_\_\_ but I just couldn't nail it". There were three of those this spring; check out the accounts for Greater Roadrunner, Baird's Sparrow, and Hooded Oriole.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ad: adult  
BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co  
CBL: Capitol Beach L, Lincoln  
CL: Carter L, Omaha  
fem: female  
FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co

Cem: Cemetery  
GPD: Gavins Point Dam, Cedar/Knox Cos  
HCR: Harlan Co Res, Harlan Co  
ICSP: Indian Cave SP, Nemaha and Richardson Cos  
imm: immature  
Jack Sinn: Jack Sinn Memorial WMA, Saunders and Lancaster Cos  
juv: juvenile  
LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co  
LBN: Lakes Babcock & North, Platte Co  
LO: L Ogallala, Keith Co  
m.ob.: many observers  
NM: National Monument  
NWR: National Wildlife Refuge  
PL: Pawnee L, Lancaster Co  
PP: Pioneers Park, Lincoln  
PRSP: Platte River SP, Cass Co  
PSP: Ponca SP, Dixon Co  
Res: Reservoir  
RWB: wetland complex in several counties of south-central and southeast Nebraska  
SCP: Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co  
SL: Sewage Lagoon(s)  
SP: State Park  
WGP: Walnut Grove Park, Omaha  
WP: Wilderness Park, Lincoln

#### OBSERVERS

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AD: Ann Duey, Scottsbluff  
AF: Andrew Furman, Wahoo  
AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering  
AKF: Amanda Keep-Filipi, Bayard  
AM: Andrea Mott, Yankton, SD  
ARy: Al Reyer, Bellevue  
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BS: Barbara Straus, Lincoln  
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CG: Carolyn Gann, Bishop, CA  
CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue  
CO: Chuck Otte, Junction City, KS  
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DA: Darren Addy, Kearney

DC: Doug Chapman, Sioux Falls, SD  
DF: Darlene Feener, Pahrump, NV  
DL: Dan Leger, Lincoln  
DSt: Dave Stage, Elkhorn  
DT: David True, Yankton, SD  
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GD: Garrett Day, Omaha  
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JBe: Jay Beltran, Ogallala  
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JCr: Jonathan Crews, Omaha  
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JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Lincoln  
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JK: Jon King, Lincoln  
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JW: Juanita Whittecar, Chadron  
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KDy: Keith Dyche, Shenandoah, IA  
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MUs: Moni Usasz, Lincoln  
MW: Michael Willison, Lincoln  
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NA: Noah Arthur, Lincoln  
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NM: Nicole Miller, Lincoln  
NR: Neal Ratzlaff, Omaha  
NV: Nick Varvel, Olathe, KS  
PH: Paula Hoppe, Colon  
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RBa: Roland Barth, Bellevue  
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RM: Robert Martinez, Denver, CO  
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SB: Scott Buss, Norfolk  
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SMa: Sam Manning, Omaha  
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SS: Shari Schwartz, Lincoln  
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SSu: Shawn Sullivan, Vermilion, SD  
TEL: Thomas E. Labedz, Lincoln  
TG: Tom Gannon, Lincoln  
TH: Tim Hajda, Broken Bow  
TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady  
VC: Virginia Clark, North Platte  
VK: Val Kollath, Omaha  
WF: William Flack, Kearney  
WK: William Kaempfer, Boulder, CO  
WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Ashland  
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA

#### SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** This goose is a rare migrant in the Panhandle, and so the 19 at Scottsbluff SL 19 Mar were noteworthy (KD).

**Snow Goose:** Peak counts in the east were at BOL, where numbers were in excess of 10,000 during 9-17 Mar (MW, LE), reaching an impressive 36,000 on 11 Mar (LE). There were also as many as 15,000 in Sarpy Co 9 Mar (CNK, L&BP). The main flocks passed through fairly quickly; after 1 Apr, best count was 43 (LE, m.ob.).

**Ross's Goose:** Peak count coincided as expected with Snow Goose peak: 1001 were at BOL 17 Mar (LE); a straggler was still at BOL through 16 May (JL, LE). Two Ross's Geese in Gothenburg Mar 2012 were banded in Nunavut in 1999 and 2005; the 1999 bird clearly a survivor (TJW).

**Cackling Goose:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide migrant.

**Canada Goose:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide migrant and resident.

**Mute Swan:** Two on a pond at Wyuka Cem, Lincoln, 16 May were considered "exotic" (JK); their provenance is not known. Vagrant Mute Swans are not unprecedented, albeit usually imms, and this species may be the next added to the State List.

**Trumpeter Swan:** The 27 at CL during the winter departed around 10 Mar; they were present 9 Mar (JR) but gone 13 Mar (JR), although 3 juvs re-appeared briefly 14 Mar (JR). The pair that began breeding near Ravenna in 2011 and has bred there since had returned 30 Mar (LR, RH).

**Tundra Swan:** The only report was of an imm with the Trumpeter Swans at CL 9 Mar (JR); it presumably departed with them around 10 Mar.

**Wood Duck:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant and summer resident.

**Gadwall:** The 1003 in Lancaster Co 1 Apr (LE) was a good tally; high counts are 1750-2600. The hybrid Gadwall x Mallard, known as Brewer's Duck, was reported twice this spring, the 4th and 5th Nebraska records, all five by the same observer (JGJ). One was in Butler Co 15 Mar and the other in Clay Co 3 May.

**American Wigeon:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide migrant.

**American Black Duck:** Usually looked for in fall flocks of Mallards, there were a surprising 4 reported this spring. A pair in Sarpy Co 22-23 Mar consisted of a Black Duck fem and an apparent hybrid (with Mallard) male; the latter had some greenish feathering on its head (RW, JR). A fem was in southeastern Washington Co 4 Mar (JR), and a male was in Howard Co 23 Mar (LR, RH). The latter was westerly; there are only 3 records west of Grand Island.

**Mallard:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide winter visitor and migrant.

**Blue-winged Teal:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide spring migrant and summer resident.

**Cinnamon Teal:** Reports of 7 birds in the west 4 Apr-3 May were expected (WF, TJW, KD), but a male in western Seward Co 20 May (GR) was easterly.

**Northern Shoveler:** The 3000 at CL 10 Apr (JR) was 3rd-highest spring count on record, after 3700 and 3300.

**Northern Pintail:** A probable hybrid with Mallard was in Dakota Co 23 Mar (BFH).

**Green-winged Teal:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide migrant.

**Canvasback:** Rather late were singles in Sarpy Co 17 May (JM) and Burt Co 19 May (LE); 4 at LO 18-21 May (JGJ) were also tardy, but not far from the western Sandhills breeding range. Late dates are 21-23 May away from the Sandhills.

**Redhead:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide spring migrant.

**Ring-necked Duck:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide spring migrant.

**Greater Scaup:** One at LO 18-21 May (JGJ) was tardy; there are only 5 later dates and 2 summer records. Most are gone by 10 May.

**Lesser Scaup:** The 2546 in Lancaster Co 20 Mar (LE) was a good count; highs are 2880-3650. This species often lingers into Jun; last for the spring period were 2 in Hall Co 25 May (LR, RH).

**Surf Scoter:** An imm male on Lewis & Clark L, Cedar Co, 12 Apr (DT) is only the 9th documented spring record and 2nd for Apr; scoters are rare in spring.

**Long-tailed Duck:** None were reported; this is a rare but essentially annual statewide spring migrant.

**Bufflehead:** The latest reports for spring were westerly, the last 21 May at LO (JGJ; m.ob.), as one might expect for a species nearing its breeding locations; however, this species breeds in Canada, with only one breeding record for Nebraska. There are about 21 summer records.

**Common Goldeneye:** Hybrids with Hooded Merganser have been reported several times in Nebraska, although repeat sightings of only 4-5 individuals may have been involved. A male hybrid at BOL 8 Mar, Nebraska's 10th record, was attempting courtship with "lots of desire and effort, but little in the way of impressive outcomes" (JGJ). Perhaps only an unimpressive effort is enough to produce a hybrid clutch.

**Hooded Merganser:** Numbers were first reported in late Mar: 20 at CL on 19 Mar (JR) and 22 at FF 26 Mar (CNK). Rare in winter, spring arrival begins in late Feb as water generally opens up. Two were in Sarpy Co 9 Mar (L&BP).



**Common Merganser:** Reports from late May into summer at LO are becoming the norm; mid-Jun through Jul sightings are likely molt migrants, but late May-early Jun sightings are of lingering birds. There are only 2 documented breeding records for the state.

**Red-breasted Merganser:** A male at Whitney L, Dawes Co, 24 May (NV) was only the 6th spring record after mid-May; there are very few summer records.

**Ruddy Duck:** Reports were routine for this locally abundant statewide spring migrant.

**Northern Bobwhite:** Reports were routine for this fairly common eastern and southern resident, extending westward in several river valleys.

**Gray Partridge:** None were reported of this currently rather rare inhabitant of northeast and north-central Nebraska.

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** Reports were routine for this locally common statewide resident.

**Sharp-tailed Grouse:** Reports were routine for this locally common resident in northern and western Nebraska.

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** A fem was early on a lek in Franklin Co 9 Mar (LR, RH); males start displaying as much as a month earlier than females. Easterly outposts continue: 2-6 were at SCP 22 Mar-1 Apr (EB, LE), and good numbers were reported from Buckskin WMA, Dixon Co, where 3 leks were found with 23 birds in all 29 Mar (MB, EBr) and 7 birds 23 Mar (BFH).

**Wild Turkey:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.

**Pacific Loon:** Nebraska's 6th spring record was of a first summer bird at PL 3 May (MW, details). Most of the 70 or so records are in summer and fall.

**Common Loon:** One at HCR 25 Mar (CNK) was rather early; early dates are 21-22 Mar. An alternate-plumaged bird was tardy in Sarpy Co 26 May (SMa); there is another record 31 May.

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Reports were routine for this common statewide spring migrant.

**Horned Grebe:** A basic-plumaged bird at BOL 11-12 Mar (LE) was rather early; early dates are 8-9 Mar.

**Eared Grebe:** Another early grebe was the Eared at CBL 15 Mar (LE); early dates are 11-13 Mar.

**Western Grebe:** A rather amazing estimate based on "a few birds per acre" was the 100,000 at LM 23 Apr (RE); although possible on this 35,000-acre lake, there may have been a few birdless acres scattered around, as, by comparison, the high fall count is 44,000 for this well-known fall staging area.

**Clark's Grebe:** None were reported; this is an uncommon western migrant.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide migrant.

**American White Pelican:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide spring migrant.

**American Bittern:** Reports were routine for this uncommon statewide migrant.

**Least Bittern:** None were reported; this is an uncommon spring migrant in the southeast and Sandhills.

- Great Blue Heron:** Existing colonies are generally occupied by late Mar; birds were on nests at LO 27 Mar (TJW).
- Great Egret:** Reports were routine for this fairly common eastern spring migrant, rare westward.
- Snowy Egret:** There were 9 reports statewide involving 16 birds, 8 of these at Saline Wetlands, Lincoln, 3 May (MW). Rather early were 2 in Douglas Co 18 Apr (JR); early dates are 10-14 Apr.
- Little Blue Heron:** Three were reported of this uncommon spring migrant. Rather early was one in Douglas Co 6 Apr (DSt); early dates are 4-5 Apr. The other reports were of singles at FF 25 Apr (EB, PS) and an ad at PP 30 Apr-5 May (LE; m.ob.).
- Cattle Egret:** One at BOL 30 Mar (BP) tied for third-earliest on record by 4 days.
- Green Heron:** Different singles were westerly in Lincoln Co 2 and 3 May (TJW).
- Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant.
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** This species is a rare spring migrant, mostly in the southeast, where a sub-ad was at Jack Sinn 21 Apr (MW). Elsewhere it is less than annual; one was at Broken Bow SL 7 May (TH).
- Glossy Ibis:** This species has been found almost every spring starting in 2005, and there were a further 6 reports this spring: singles were at Jack Sinn 20 Apr (GR), in Scotts Bluff Co 27 Apr (KD, JJ) and likely the same bird 10 May (KD, AK), PL 5-9 May (JK, m.ob.), Frontier Co 14-16 May (TJW, m.ob.), and Seward Co 16 May (KS).
- White-faced Ibis:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant.
- Turkey Vulture:** Rather early were singles over FF 8 Mar (fide CNK) and Bellevue 9 Mar (CNK); most arrive in mid-Mar but early dates are at the end of Feb.
- Osprey:** One at HCR 28-29 Mar (TJW, SQ) was rather early; early dates are 19-22 Mar. One of 3 at Summit L, Burt Co, 2 May carried a blue marker indicative of the South Dakota stocking program (SSc); nesting was attempted there for the first time in 2013 and the same marked bird was present then as well.
- Mississippi Kite:** The resident birds at Ogallala appeared 4 May (JO), with 3 there by 21 May (JGJ); breeding occurs in McCook also, where one was seen 15 May (RB fide TJW). One in Alliance 22 Apr (RE) was about the 8th-earliest on record, and in a potential breeding location, but one in Hamilton Co 26 May (LR, RH) was easterly for spring.
- Bald Eagle:** An impressive number of migrants flew over FF 13 Mar, when a total of 234 were counted in 2 ½ hours, including one kettle of 45 (CNK). The only higher spring tally was the 800 at Calamus Res 24 Mar 2010.
- Northern Harrier:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant.
- Sharp-shinned Hawk:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant.
- Cooper's Hawk:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.
- Northern Goshawk:** There were 3 reports of this rare migrant: one in Buffalo Co 25 Mar (CS), one in Dakota Co 29 Mar (MB, EBr) and another in Douglas Co 12 Apr (CNK).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Singles, possibly the same bird, were over FF 16 (RSt) and 17 (ARy) May; breeding is sporadic at this location.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** Breeding probably occurs every year in the Missouri River Valley, but actual nest reports are scarce. This year a pair was nesting at the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha where a fem was incubating 13 May (GD). Another pair was nesting in Mandan Park, Omaha, 21 May (CNK), and one was collecting sticks in Bellevue 6 May, although a nest was not seen (L&BP). Another some distance away in Bellevue was seen for the third time in a week 6 May, suggestive of local nesting (ARy). Late May reports likely also indicate breeding; singles were at Hummel Park, Omaha, 24 and 27 May (BP, CNK) and at PSP 30 May (MB). The only westerly report was of one in Frontier Co 14-15 May (TJW, JGJ) and another at Merritt Res, Cherry Co, 16 May (RT).

**Swainson's Hawk:** Reports were routine for this common statewide spring migrant, uncommon east.

**Red-tailed Hawk:** Two nests with incubation under way were found in Sarpy Co 5 Mar (JLL); most incubation is initiated by 10 Mar in the east. Last "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk reported was 5 Apr in Douglas Co (CNK); latest dates for this form are 17-20 Apr. Last "Kriders" Red-tailed Hawk reported was 4 Apr in Lancaster Co (JK), although there were later reports 8 and 18 May in Clay Co of a pale bird that might have been an introgressant with "Eastern" Red-tailed Hawk and a "pure enough" "Kriders" Red-tailed Hawk in Seward Co 21 May (JK). The status of "Kriders" Red-tailed Hawk as a breeding bird needs clarification; it is believed to nest in extreme northern and northwestern Nebraska and intergrades with "Eastern" Red-taileds occur. These May sightings suggest that occasional birds that resemble phenotypic "Kriders" Red-tailed Hawk may occur as far southeast as Clay and Seward Cos during the breeding season. Unusual for Red-taileds was the congregation of 50-100 in a field being disked in Dawson Co 23 Mar (LR, RH).

**Ferruginous Hawk:** Reports were routine for this uncommon western resident.

**Rough-legged Hawk:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide winter visitor.

**Golden Eagle:** Two were reported in the extreme east: a sub-ad over Omaha 15 Mar (SMA, pics) and an ad in Sarpy Co 9 Mar (CNK). Few ads move this far east.

**Yellow Rail:** The only report of this presumably regular but hard to find migrant through the east was of one flushed at Wilkinson WMA, Platte Co, 15 May (SB). Of a total of only 18 spring records, 12 are in the period 26 Apr-15 May.

**Virginia Rail:** The 7 near Fremont 18 May (RMa) were likely migrants, although breeding can occur in suitable places almost anywhere in the state.

**Sora:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant.

**American Coot:** The 6000 at CL 10 Apr (JR) set a new spring high count record; previous high was 4500. One that decided to perch about 25 ft up in a cherry tree in downtown Omaha for about an hour in the late morning 21 Apr (DSt) may have been trying to escape the CL crowd.

- Sandhill Crane:** Reports in the east are becoming more numerous since 2001, when it was considered only "casual" (less than annual, *Birds of Nebraska*). This spring there were 8 reports 9 Mar-5 Apr, mostly of flocks containing up to 35 birds (MW, CNK, m.ob.).
- Common Crane:** This year's set of sightings involved one found just north of I-80 and west of Highway 183 in Buffalo Co 2 Apr (KS), where it was seen by many through 7 Apr, when it moved just south of the Platte River to Phelps Co for 2 days, 8-9 Apr (SG, CC, LS, fide MB) and then was found again in its Buffalo Co spot 11 Apr (JR). This is the 15th record of this species; there is some debate as to how many individual birds are involved. It has occurred annually from 2007 through 2012, but was not reported in 2013.
- Whooping Crane:** Not all sightings are reported, due to the endangered status of the species, but 5 reports came to hand of up to 7 birds 29 Mar-13 Apr (m.ob.) in expected locations during the usual migration period. Surprising were two in Jefferson Co 5-21 May (RTe, JGJ); one-year-old birds sometimes linger and do not complete spring migration.
- Black-bellied Plover:** Reports were routine for this uncommon statewide migrant.
- American Golden-Plover:** One still in "mostly basic" plumage was early at Jack Sinn 20 Mar (MW); there are only 5 earlier dates. Few were reported of this often-abundant spring migrant; there were only about 50 in the expected period 7-25 May (m.ob.).
- Snowy Plover:** The only report was of one in western Seward Co 18 May (JGJ); this is a rare spring visitor mostly to the RWB, averaging about one record each year.
- Semipalmated Plover:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.
- Piping Plover:** Migrants are only rarely reported; singles were at PL 25 Apr (MW) and 3 May (MW) and in Frontier Co 14-16 May (TJW, PH). Most reports were from known breeding locations: L McConaughy, max 2 (JGJ, TG); lower Platte River, max 5 (m.ob.); Lewis and Clark L, max 10 (SSu); and GPD reach, max 15 (AM, DT). Total counts at these locations are likely higher.
- Killdeer:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide migrant.
- Mountain Plover:** First arrivals reported were 2 in Kimball Co 1 Apr (LS); early dates are 24-26 Mar. Only 6 additional birds were reported through 24 May, all in Kimball Co (KD, WF, JJ, MW).
- Black-necked Stilt:** One in Jefferson Co 4 Apr (SMa) was not only easterly, but the earliest spring date on record by 5 days.
- American Avocet:** Eastern records have become the norm in recent years, underscored by counts of 177 in Lancaster Co 21 Apr (LE) and 95 at LBN 25 Apr (JGJ). Oddly for what is considered a "western" bird, the 3 highest statewide spring counts on record (303-700) are from Niobrara and the RWB eastward.
- Spotted Sandpiper:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant and summer resident.
- Solitary Sandpiper:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant.
- Greater Yellowlegs:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant.

**Willet:** As with American Avocet, this species has become more numerous in the east in recent years; 30 were at LBN 4 May (SMA), and good RWB counts were 47 on 13 May (JGJ) and 44 at Hansen WPA, Clay Co, 3 May (JGJ). Nebraska Willets are of the western subspecies *Tringa semipalmata inornatus*, as observed with singles at PL 8 and 11 May (JK).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.

**Upland Sandpiper:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant.

**Whimbrel:** There were reports from 5 locations, notably the Tamora area, western Seward Co, where up to 5 were present 16-20 May (KS, TG, MW, GR), as well as southwestern Kimball Co, where 7 were found 25 Apr (GW, WK). Singles were in Perkins Co 10 May (AW), near York 15 May (JGJ), and at LO 21 May (JGJ). Peak numbers generally occur mid- May.

**Long-billed Curlew:** The 25 in the North Platte area 15 Apr (TJW) was a good tally; high count is 30.

**Hudsonian Godwit:** One in Sarpy Co 31 Mar (L&BP) was earliest on record by 6 days; early dates are 6-7 Apr. Good counts were the 317 in the eastern RWB 13 May (JGJ) and the 234 in one Seward Co "puddle" 20 May (JK).

**Marbled Godwit:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide spring migrant, less common eastward.

**Ruddy Turnstone:** More than usual were reported, including an amazing record concentration of 100+ near Tamora, Seward Co, 16 May (KS). Previous highs were in the 40s. As is typical of this species, spring migration occupied a narrow window; all 14 reports were in the period 13-21 May (m.ob.).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** One at Jack Sinn 1 Apr (MW, details) was record early by 2 days. Generally the first arrivals are in late Apr.

**Sanderling:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant.

**Dunlin:** Best count was 50 near Tamora 16 May (KS); high counts are 70-400.

**Baird's Sandpiper:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.

**Least Sandpiper:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** Best tally was the 2500 in the eastern RWB 13 May (JGJ); high counts there are 4000-7000.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** Three in Dodge Co 25 May (LE) were rather late; latest dates are 27-28 May.

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** One at Jack Sinn 15 Mar (LE) was rather early; early dates are 4-13 Mar.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Best count was the 2000+ in the eastern RWB 13 May (JGJ); high one-day tallies there are 3300-3500.

**Western Sandpiper:** There were 8 reports involving at least 16 birds 26 Apr-16 May (m.ob.), including a good count of 11 in Lancaster Co 13 May (LE). Singles were at Broken Bow SL 26 Apr, 1 and 9 May (TH), in Butler Co 2 May (WF), in Fillmore Co 3 May (JGJ), in Sarpy Co 9 May (EB), and in Seward Co 16 May (LE).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** The 4 in eastern Douglas Co 24 Apr (JT) were rather early; previous early dates were 25-27 Apr, although there are documented records for 16 and 20 Apr. Most pass through in May; the remaining 13 reports were in the period 10-20 May, involving some 50 birds (m.ob.).

Best count was 24 in the eastern RWB 13 May (JGJ); high counts are 89-140.

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.

**Wilson's Snipe:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant.

**American Woodcock:** Reports were routine for this uncommon easterly migrant and summer resident.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** One "swimming in circles" in Hall Co 28 Mar (SQ) was 3rd-earliest on record; earlier dates are 18 and 23 Mar. Huge numbers congregate at favored locations in spring; 5000+ were at Swan L, Holt Co, 14 May (D&JP). High counts are 6550-10,000.

**Red-necked Phalarope:** This species is rare in the east, but 1-2 were in Seward Co 16-20 May (LE, L&BP, MW, GR), and one was in southeastern Washington Co 17 May (L&BP).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant.

**Laughing Gull:** A second cycle bird at CL 27-29 May (JR, BP, MW) is the 6th spring record. In addition there are 14 more records in summer and fall.

**Franklin's Gull:** The 5000 at LBN 20 Apr (TJW) was 4rd-highest spring count on record, after counts of "tens of thousands", 12,592 and 6000.

**Ring-billed Gull:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide migrant.

**California Gull:** Although the prairie-breeding subspecies *Larus californicus albertaensis* breeds as far southeast as the Dakotas, easterly reports of California Gull in Nebraska are scarce, and most records are of ads. This spring, however, reports were indicative of a surprising influx of ads, imms, and first-winter birds. Many of the reports, unfortunately, were not supported by unequivocal photographs, especially showing birds in flight. Good photos were provided of a 2nd-cycle bird first seen at CL 13 Mar (JR); presumably the same bird was reported through 12 Apr (JR, SMa, GR). An ad was in Dakota Co 20 Mar (BFH), one was in Sarpy Co 3 Apr (CNK), and an ad was at PL 5 May (MW photo, JK). A first winter bird was at CL 29 Mar (JR, SMa photo) and presumably the same bird was there through 4 Apr (JR). Intriguing were reports of as many as 15 first-year birds at NP Dodge Park, Omaha, 2-6 Apr; photos submitted to document this important event were, however, not conclusive, although circumstantial evidence in favor included the several reports of older age classes as well as the appearance of increased numbers of Thayer's Gulls and an imm Glaucous-winged Gull at NP Dodge Park (see that species). Identification of California Gulls can be challenging and observers are encouraged to provide photos of birds observed in the east; flight photos are most useful for first cycle birds.

**Herring Gull:** Ads are scarce after Apr; record late for an ad was one at LM 19 May (JGJ).

**Thayer's Gull:** This species is an uncommon statewide migrant, but more than expected appeared in the east. About 13 were reported, with a peak count of 6 (5 first-winter, one 3rd winter) at CL 25 Mar (JR, m.ob.). Two late singles were reported; understandably, one with a broken leg was at LBN 20 Apr (TJW), but a juv at LM 23 Apr (RE) was 2nd-latest on record for

spring. Single ads were at BOL 12 Mar (LE) and in Cedar Co 21 Mar (MB, photo).

**Iceland Gull:** Continuing the influx in numbers and species of gulls in the east, 3 Iceland ("Kumlien's") gulls unexpectedly provided the 5th-7th spring records for the state. An ad was videotaped at BOL 22 Mar (JGJ) and remained until 28 Mar (MW, LE, DL), but was replaced by a first winter bird there 29 Mar (CNK, GR, SMa). A 3rd-winter bird was at CL 24-27 Mar (SMa, JGJ, JR).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Continuing to increase in numbers as a migrant, most commonly in the east, 16 were reported statewide 9 Mar (MW) through 19 Apr (m.ob.); 4 were at NP Dodge Park, Omaha, 2-4 Apr (JR) and 4 also were at LM 27 Mar (TJW).

**Glaucous-winged Gull:** A "notably small and small-billed" (RW) juv bird appeared with the mixed flock of gulls at N. P. Dodge Park, Omaha, 2-4 Apr (JR, RW, NA, CNK, L&BP). This is Nebraska's 4th documented record, all of which are in the period Dec-Apr.

**Glaucous Gull:** There was no influx of this species; only 2 were reported 25-27 Mar (CNK, TJW), along with a Glaucous x Herring bird ("Nelson's Gull") at NP Dodge Park, Omaha, 3 Apr (RW).

**Great Black-backed Gull:** A first year bird put in a brief appearance at NP Dodge Park, Omaha, 5 Apr (JR, details), providing Nebraska's 7th spring record, 24th in all.

**Least Tern:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant, absent from the Panhandle.

**Caspian Tern:** Reports were routine for this uncommon statewide migrant.

**Black Tern:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.

**Common Tern:** There were 5 reports statewide 29 Apr-31 May (m.ob), involving 11 birds, a good showing for this uncommon migrant.

**Forster's Tern:** The 104 at PL 11 May (JK) was a good count; highs are 132-228.

**Rock Pigeon:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.

**White-winged Dove:** There were 4 reports: 1-2 were in Grand Island 12-17 Apr (AC), one was in Gering 27 Apr (RSg), one was in Ogallala 30 Apr (JO), and one was in Gothenburg 10 May at the same place as last year (J&JH).

**Mourning Dove:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant and summer resident.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant and summer resident.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Only two of this declining species were reported: singles at WP 21 May (LE) and in York Co 31 May (LE).

**Greater Roadrunner:** Yet another intriguing report, this by an observer experienced with the species, was of one crossing Ravenna Road some 6-8 miles north of Highway 30, in Buffalo Co 2 Mar (BA). There have been recent records in Yuma Co, CO, adjacent to Nebraska, and in Lawrence, KS, where one wintered 1999-2000. *Birds of Kansas* says that outlying sightings are generally in fall and winter, like the Lawrence bird, and of course this most recent March 2 sighting from Nebraska. Another purported Nebraska

sighting was near Funk 29 Mar 2004, which could also be considered a winter sighting (this record was judged inconclusive by the NOU Records Committee due to lack of detail). As yet there are no documented records for Nebraska; this Buffalo Co sighting will be submitted to the NOU Records Committee.

**Barn Owl:** None were reported of this uncommon migrant statewide, rare east, and summer resident south, rare north and east.

**Eastern Screech-Owl:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.

**Great Horned Owl:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.

**Snowy Owl:** Following an average winter with 6 reports, the 3 reports were not unexpected: 2 were near LM 8 Mar (PP fide TJW), one was in Dawson Co 10 Mar (KPe), and one was at Valentine NWR, Cherry Co, 12 Mar (ML fide JGJ).

**Burrowing Owl:** Reports were routine for this common western migrant and summer resident.

**Barred Owl:** One was incubating 3 eggs in a western Douglas Co nest box 5 Mar (DSt); this is an early date for this box and for the state. The range is slowly expanding westward along the Republican River; one at Narrows WMA, Webster Co, 14 May (WF) is the 2nd-westernmost record there, about 7 miles east of a record near Riverton, Franklin Co.

**Long-eared Owl:** One roosting in conifers in Cedar Co 20 Apr (SSu) was likely a winter visitor nearing departure; egg dates are in early April, but migrants are still moving through in mid-Apr.

**Short-eared Owl:** There were about 15 reported, none that appeared to be on territory, through 21 Apr (m.ob.); egg dates are Apr-May.

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** After the amazing survey results of 2010 by Bart Bly and co-workers, which estimated some 48 breeding pairs in the pinewoods areas of western Nebraska, Wayne Mollhoff erected a few nest boxes in likely places in the surveyed area. On 17 Apr he found 5 eggs in a box in the Wildcat Hills in Scotts Bluff Co; there were 4 young on 10 May. This is the first documented nesting for the state (WM). An apparently fledged juv was at the nest box 25 May (MW, AK). Calling birds were heard in the cedar canyons in Lincoln Co 26 Apr (TJW), and one present in a Kearney park for at least a few days through 19 Mar was recorded (DA). Breeding seems likely in Lincoln Co, but the Kearney bird seems more likely to be a migrant; it is not known whether calling occurs prior to birds leaving winter roost sites, but apparently calling does not occur during migration.

**Common Nighthawk:** The significant difference in arrival times between the western and eastern subspecies was illustrated by the first reported arrivals at opposite ends of the state this spring: one was over Omaha 6 May (JR) and one was in Scotts Bluff Co 29 May (AD).

**Common Poorwill:** First reported were rather early on 26 Apr, both in Lincoln Co cedar canyons (TJW) and in Custer Co (TH). Early dates are 22-25 Apr.

**Chuck-will's-widow:** First reported was 3 May near Rulo (CNK); early dates are 23-29 Apr. Reports were from Nemaha, Richardson, and Pawnee Cos (WF, fide MB, TG, MW).



- Eastern Whip-poor-will:** Arrival was about on time: singles were in the Omaha-Bellevue area 24 Apr (EBE, RS), and 8-9 were at ICSP the next day (JR). Early dates are 15-18 Apr.
- Chimney Swift:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant and summer resident, less common west.
- White-throated Swift:** Reports were routine for this fairly common migrant and uncommon summer resident in the Panhandle.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** All but one of the reports were from the east, as expected, the earliest one was in Bellevue 27 Apr (L&BP), perhaps a little later than usual.
- Broad-tailed Hummingbird:** Nebraska's first documented spring record was of one photographed in Dawes Co 22 May (JW). There are a few additional spring records, none documented, for this species, which migrates north just to the west of Nebraska.
- Hummingbird sp.:** Because Ruby-throated Hummingbird is rare in the west, spring sightings of hummers there are of interest. Recent years have seen increasing reports of Ruby-throats migrating through and even summering in the Panhandle, and Black-chinned Hummingbird has reached Nebraska in the last few years. At least 3 different birds showed up this spring in the observer's yard in southern Scotts Bluff Co 27 May-20 Jun (AK). Rufous coloration was not mentioned, and so it seems likely that these were indeed *Archilocus* hummers.
- Belted Kingfisher:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant and summer resident.
- Lewis's Woodpecker:** The small population in lower Sowbelly Canyon, Sioux Co, will likely continue for 2014; 3 ads were there 26 May (MW). Early dates for the species are 1-5 May.
- Red-headed Woodpecker:** Wintering occurs most years in the southeast; in winter 2013-2014, "many were wintering in oak bottoms" (JR). Migrants arrived in early May: 12 were at WGP 6 May, where none were present 3-4 May (JWH). First reported in the west was one in Scotts Bluff Co 19 May (AK).
- Red-bellied Woodpecker:** A male appeared in a Scotts Bluff Co yard 26 Apr after being absent during the winter, and 2 were there 3 May (KD); presumably these are the pair that summered in the yard in 2011 and 2013. It would be interesting to know where these presumably non-migratory birds wintered.
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Reports were routine for this uncommon eastern migrant, rare westward.
- Downy Woodpecker:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.
- Hairy Woodpecker:** The fem of the Rocky Mountains subspecies continued in a Scotts Bluff Co yard 12-17 May (KD).
- Northern Flicker:** A "Red-shafted Flicker" was easterly and a bit tardy in Sarpy Co 5 Apr (CNK); there are later dates in the east 6, 10, and 13 Apr and 3 May.
- Pileated Woodpecker:** One was at Flathead WMA, Jefferson Co, 3 May where one was seen in spring 2013 (JGJ). Along with Barred Owl expanding in riparian corridors in the same general area, it might be expected that such westward range expansions will continue. In Kansas a similar phenomenon has been noted, attributed to recovery and maturation of riparian woodlands

westward in the absence of fire (CO, PJ) and to drought killing larger trees and providing substrate for wood-boring insect larvae (fide WRS).

**American Kestrel:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.

**Merlin:** Four were identified to subspecies, all singles of the expected wintering form *Falco columbarius richardsonii*, through 11 Apr (JK, EB, RW). Last was seen 3 May at FF (JR), unidentified to subspecies; last dates for migrants are around 20 May.

**Peregrine Falcon:** Reports were routine for this uncommon statewide migrant and local eastern resident.

**Prairie Falcon:** Easterly was one at Bellevue 16 Apr (EB).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Reports were routine for this uncommon eastern migrant, rare west.

**Western Wood-Pewee:** Reports were routine for this common western migrant and summer resident.

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** Reports were routine for this common eastern migrant and summer resident.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** Two were reported, both on what would be new early dates for the species (6, 7 May); neither was accompanied by convincing details, and one was listed by the observer as "possible" only. I consider these reports undocumented.

**Acadian Flycatcher:** One at Rulo, Richardson Co, 3 May (CNK) was rather early; early dates are 1-2 May. The 13 reports, involving 15-20 birds, 3-31 May (m.ob.) were all from Douglas Co southward in the Missouri River Valley except for one calling at WP 31 May (MW). Best count was 6 at ICSP 29 May (MW).

**Alder Flycatcher:** Rather early were 2 in Omaha 7 May (JR), 2 at FF 10 May (GR) and one at WP 10 May (LE); early dates are 6-7 May.

**Willow Flycatcher:** Reports were routine for this fairly common eastern migrant, uncommon west, and uncommon statewide summer resident.

**Least Flycatcher:** Two at ICSP 26 Apr (JR) and one in Lincoln the same day (RSt) were rather early; early dates are 22-24 Apr. Best count was the 25 at FF 5 May (EB); high counts are 50-54.

**Cordilleran Flycatcher:** The two reports were from the breeding range: singles in Sowbelly Canyon, Sioux Co, 26 May (MW) and Chadron SP, Dawes Co, 27 May (TG). Expansion eastward to Dawes Co has occurred only in the last 25 years or so.

**Eastern Phoebe:** The 22 in Douglas, Sarpy, and Cass Cos 3 Apr (RW) was 3rd-highest for spring; highest are 50 and "a few dozen". One in Richardson Co 11 Mar (LF, SQ) was rather early; early dates are 4-8 Mar in the south and east.

**Say's Phoebe:** Easterly records are few and mostly north of Polk Co; this spring one was in Cedar Co 4 Apr (DT) and another in Polk Co 12 Apr (MN).

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** Arrival was on the early side; 3 were at FF 25 Apr (EB) and 3 were at ICSP 26 Apr (JR). Early dates in the east are 20-22 Apr.

**Cassin's Kingbird:** Reports were routine for this fairly common western migrant.

**Western Kingbird:** Rather early in the west were singles in Lincoln Co 24 Apr (TJW), Perkins Co 26 Apr (AW), and Scotts Bluff Co 27 Apr (KD). Early dates are 22-25 Apr.

**Eastern Kingbird:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** The 5 reports were of singles, the earliest 2 of which were males. One at Jack Sinn 21 Apr (MW) was rather early; early dates are 14-19 Apr. Other singles were in Saline Co 24 Apr (JPK), Richardson Co 3 May (CNK), Knox Co 9 May (J&LS), one of few northerly reports, and Lincoln Co 25-26 May (JA). This species now occurs each spring, usually in the southeast and south-central.

**Loggerhead Shrike:** A rather late nest with 5 eggs was in Kimball Co 21 May (WM).

**Northern Shrike:** Reports were routine for this uncommon statewide winter visitor.

**White-eyed Vireo:** Recent years have seen an increase in sightings of this still-rare bird; 3 were reported this spring: singles were at ICSP 26 Apr (EB), in PP 1 May (MW), and in Boyd Co 11 May (MB). Interestingly, none of these were in Douglas and Sarpy Cos; previously there had been only 10 records outside Douglas and Sarpy Cos since 1981.

**Bell's Vireo:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant and summer resident.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Reports were routine for this fairly common eastern migrant and summer resident.

**Plumbeous Vireo:** Reports were routine for this uncommon western migrant and summer resident.

**Blue-headed Vireo:** Rather early were singles at ICSP 26 Apr (JR, heard only) and FF 28 Apr (MUs). Early dates are 21-23 Apr.

**Warbling Vireo:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant and summer resident.

**Philadelphia Vireo:** Reports were routine for this uncommon eastern migrant, rare central.

**Red-eyed Vireo:** Reports were routine for this common eastern migrant, uncommon west, and common statewide summer resident.

**Pinyon Jay:** None were reported of this fairly common western winter irruptive and uncommon and secretive western summer resident.

**Steller's Jay:** The last reported of the small number (3-7) that wintered in Scotts Bluff Co was one there 13 Mar (AK).

**Blue Jay:** A nest 10 ft up in a Honey Locust 28 Apr (LE) was a bit on the early side.

**Black-billed Magpie:** Reports continue in the northeast; 4 were at the "usual spot" near GPD 7 and 18 Mar (RD), and one was west of Winnebago, Thurston Co, 19 May (WF). Apart from 2 in southwest Nuckolls Co 23 Mar (JGJ), reports were from Scotts Bluff Co, where up to 6 were at Winters Creek through the period (KD, AD), and 4 others were reported at different sites 26 Apr and 3 May (KD), and from Sioux Co, where 2 in Smiley Canyon 23 Apr were the only ones seen on a 2-day western Nebraska trip 23-24 Apr (RE).

**American Crow:** This species shows marked migratory tendencies on the Great Plains, where spring migrants are conspicuous mid-Mar; 55 flew north over FF 13 Mar (CNK).

**Horned Lark:** Reports were routine for this common statewide winter visitor and abundant statewide migrant.

**Purple Martin:** Two at Alma 30 Mar (MW) were rather early; early dates, mostly male "scouts" are 12-15 Mar.

**Tree Swallow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant and summer resident.

**Violet-green Swallow:** Two in Scotts Bluff Co 27 Apr (KD) were rather early; early dates are 23-26 Apr.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant and summer resident.

**Bank Swallow:** Singles in Lancaster Co 5 Apr (SMA) and Sarpy Co 7 Apr (fide WRS) were rather early; early dates are (were) 3-6 Apr.

**Cliff Swallow:** 4 in Lincoln Co 9 Apr (LD) were rather early; early dates are 4-6 Apr.

**Barn Swallow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant and summer resident.

**Black-capped Chickadee:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.

**Tufted Titmouse:** Reports were routine for this common eastern resident.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Intriguing activity was noted at Holmes L, Lincoln, where 2 had wintered (LE); this pair was investigating a likely nest hole in an ash tree 9-18 Apr, and at least one was still present 30 Apr and 11 May (LE). Territorial behavior in Apr-May (and later into summer) has been observed before in eastern Nebraska, but there are no records of successful breeding. Most wintering birds depart by late May.

**White-breasted Nuthatch:** This species breeds in the east and westward throughout major river valleys with large trees and on the Pine Ridge (different subspecies), and is generally absent in summer elsewhere. In winter, however, most of the state is occupied. Thus singles in Custer and Logan Cos 4 Apr (WF) and in Kimball Co 5 Apr (WF) were likely wintering there. Two at Bridgeport 19 Apr (JGJ) may have been residents or wintering birds.

**Pygmy Nuthatch:** Reports were routine for this fairly common western resident.

**Brown Creeper:** This species breeds at FF in small numbers; one was singing there 18 Apr (JR) and another was seen 17 May (DC). Wintering birds are generally gone by 1 May. The 5 at a single Cass Co site 23 Mar (RE) was a good count; high for spring is 9.

**Rock Wren:** One in Lincoln Co 6 Apr (TJW) was rather early; early dates are 2-6 Apr. One that perched on the car mirror to check out the observer (LB) in Phelps Co 24 Apr was a bit easterly.

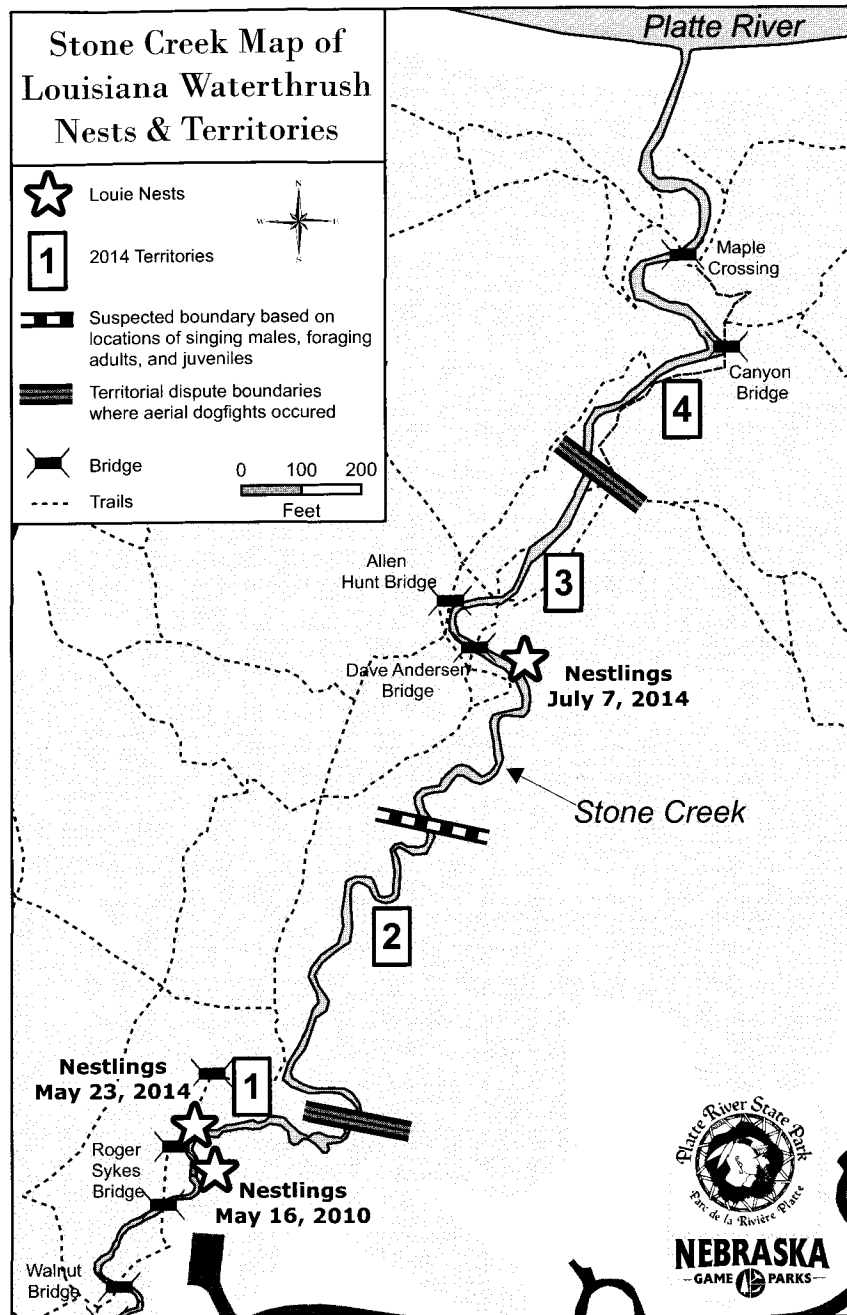
**House Wren:** Singles at FF 11 Apr (EB) and in Harlan Co 12 Apr (LR, RH) were rather early; early dates are 5-7 Apr in the east.

**Winter Wren:** One in an eastern Cherry Co Sandhills yard 12 May (MSS) was tardy; late dates are 9-15 May.

**Sedge Wren:** Rather early were singles at FF 24 Apr (EB) and at Jack Sinn 25 Apr (JR); early dates are 18-20 Apr.

- Marsh Wren:** One at Jack Sinn 4 May was singing an eastern type song (JK); migrants at this site are likely all or mostly easterns, although western song-types have been reported in spring migration east to Butler Co (WF).
- Carolina Wren:** There were several reports from southern counties (CNK, LR, RH, JGJ) west to Frontier Co, where one was singing 15 May (TJW); reports were numerous from the east as expected, north to Cuming Co 20 May (LE) and northwest to Howard Co 10 May (LR, RH).
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Three at WP 6 Apr (TG) were rather early, tying the early dates (3 other 6 Apr records). Arrival is later in the west, where earliest reported were in Lincoln Co 3 May (RL, TJW) and in Scotts Bluff Co 10 May (KD). Early dates in the west are 30 Apr-1 May. The 45 at ICSP 26 Apr (JR) was record high; previous high was 30. Nesting was underway at FF 5 May (EB), about on time.
- Golden-crowned Kinglet:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant.
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** One in Sioux Co 26 May (MW) was tardy; late dates in the west are 28-29 May.
- Eastern Bluebird:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant and common eastern and central summer resident, uncommon west.
- Mountain Bluebird:** Two birds, a possible "pair", were reported near Gilman Canyon in Lincoln Co 17 May (J&JH); nesting has not been documented as yet in Lincoln Co, although the cedar canyons there are an important wintering area. It is likely this report is of late migrants.
- Townsend's Solitaire:** This species occurs most winters in the east, but probably not annually. Singles were reported at 3 locations in Lancaster Co: at Wagon Train L 6 Mar (TG), a few miles south of Lincoln 5 Apr (SMa), and in WP 6 Apr (TG).
- Veery:** Nine singles were reported in the east 7-18 May (m.ob.), a good showing. In the west, singles were in Sheridan Co 25 May (DV) and Sowbelly Canyon, Sioux Co, 29 May (MW). Eastern and western birds belong to different subspecies.
- Gray-cheeked Thrush:** As expected, all reports were from the east: 17 birds 6-19 May (m.ob.), about an average showing.
- Swainson's Thrush:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.
- Hermit Thrush:** Since there were no reports of wintering birds in the southeast, where wintering has occurred, the several late Mar-early Apr reports this spring were likely early migrants. One at Nebraska City 10 Mar (SQ) may indeed have wintered, but 1-2 at PP 31 Mar-1 Apr (LE) may have been migrants, along with the remaining reports through 16 May, the latter at FF and rather late (MSt); late dates in the east are 17-21 May.
- Wood Thrush:** One at ICSP 26 Apr (JR) was rather early; early dates are 20-23 Apr.
- American Robin:** The 796 in Lancaster Co 7 Mar (LE) is 3rd-highest for spring; higher are counts of 1200 and 852. In early Mar the first yard birds separate from flocks and take up territories; one such was in Omaha 1 Mar (SMa).
- Gray Catbird:** Reports were routine for this common eastern and central migrant, uncommon west.

- Northern Mockingbird:** One that wintered in North Platte was still present 14 Mar (TJW). One in Lancaster Co 20 Mar (D&JP) was early, although it may have wintered in the area. Early dates are (were) 18-25 Mar.
- Sage Thrasher:** The 2 in southwestern Kimball Co 24 May (MW) provided only the 15th spring record for the state. The records are in the period 23 Mar-26 May in the western Panhandle.
- Brown Thrasher:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant and summer resident.
- European Starling:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide migrant and common summer resident.
- American Pipit:** The 4 at PL 17 Mar (LE) were rather early; early dates are 10-13 Mar.
- Sprague's Pipit:** None were reported; this species has been found when looked for in recent years at places like Spring Creek Prairie around 1 May.
- Bohemian Waxwing:** None were reported of this common but erratic western winter visitor and migrant.
- Cedar Waxwing:** There were several reports of dead waxwings in the east, possibly a result of cyanide poisoning from eating cotoneaster berries and crab apples, both of which contain cyanogenic glycosides that are stimulated to produce cyanide by unusually cold weather (JGJ; *Nebraskaland Magazine* May 2014).
- Lapland Longspur:** Reports were routine for this common winter visitor and abundant migrant.
- Chestnut-collared Longspur:** Migrants can occur in large numbers, with high counts over 500, but a good tally was the 155 in Keith Co 17 Apr (JK).
- Smith's Longspur:** The 2 reports, involving 3 birds, were from SCP 29 Mar (JK, MW) and 1 Apr (2; LE).
- McCown's Longspur:** The 4 reports were from Kimball Co 5 Apr-21 May (KD, WF, JJ, WM). This species is a fairly common breeder in suitable short-grass habitat in the western Panhandle.
- Snow Bunting:** After the winter's fairly good showing, last reported were 4 at BOL through 8 Mar (JGJ, LE) and 2 at PL through 12 Mar (LE). These dates are rather late, as prior late dates were 10-12 Mar. There are only 3 isolated later dates through 23 Mar.
- Ovenbird:** One at ICSP 26 Apr (JR) was rather early; early dates are 22-24 Apr. Earliest reported in central Nebraska were singles at Ogallala 8 May (JO) and near North Platte 10 May (TJW).
- Worm-eating Warbler:** Rarely reported in recent years, one was at Riverside Park, Nebraska City, 13 May (JGi). There are about 50 spring records in all.
- Louisiana Waterthrush:** All reports were from regular locations in the east. The birds breeding along Stone Creek, PRSP, have been well-documented in recent years by John Carlini and Shari Schwartz; this year 3 territories had been established as early as 15 Apr and a fourth by 11 May, and ads were first noted feeding young 23 May. First arrival at PRSP was 13 Apr (TG).
- Northern Waterthrush:** One in Platte Co 26 May (MN) was rather late; late dates are 27-29 May.



Locations of Louisiana Waterthrush nests and 2014 territories along Stone Creek, Platte River State Park, as noted by John Carlini and Shari Schwartz. Map courtesy of Trisha Schlake of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

**Golden-winged Warbler:** At least 12 were reported, all in the east as expected, 6-22 May (m.ob.). Prior to 1993 there were only about 30 spring records, but starting in 1993, there have been 4 years with 12 or more reported.

**Blue-winged Warbler:** This species also showed well, with 4 reports: singles were at WP 11 May (JC, SS), in Omaha 13 May (JR), at Hummel Park, Omaha, 17 May (m.ob.), and at ICSP 30 May (JR).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant.

**Prothonotary Warbler:** Reports were more numerous than usual, including a pair occupying a nest box at Great Marsh, FF, beginning 14 May (EA, RBa photo) and continuing through the period. This appears to be only the 4th documented nesting at FF since 1970. There were reports of additional singles in FF at 3 additional locations (PS, BW, DT). Elsewhere, singles were at Towl Park, Omaha, 7-9 May (BP, NR, JR), Standing Bear L, Omaha, 10 May (AF), Nebraska City 11 May (JGJ), and at Heron Haven, Omaha, 13 May (BP).

**Tennessee Warbler:** This species is rare westerly; good finds were singles in Lincoln Co 10 May (TJW), Frontier Co 15 May (TJW), and Grant Co 21 May (JGJ). There are 40+ Panhandle spring records.

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.

**Nashville Warbler:** One in Frontier Co 15 May (TJW) was westerly; there are few records from the west.

**Connecticut Warbler:** Usually only one or two are reported each spring. This year, singles were in eastern Douglas Co 22 May (JT) and at Hormel Park, Fremont, 22-23 May (JCr).

**MacGillivray's Warbler:** The only reports were of singles at LO 19 May (JGJ) and in Scotts Bluff Co 25 May (MW). This is an uncommon migrant in the west.

**Mourning Warbler:** Reports were routine for this fairly common eastern migrant.

**Kentucky Warbler:** Most reports were from known summer locations: ICSP, FF, and PRSP (m.ob.). A surprise was a westerly migrant at Grand Island 25 May (LR, RH, SM), only the 14th in spring away from the Missouri River Valley. Possible migrants were singles at Rulo 3 May (CNK) and in Bellevue 9 May (KCR).

**Common Yellowthroat:** One in western Nebraska 23 Apr (RE) was rather early; early dates are 20-22 Apr.

**Hooded Warbler:** A surprising number were reported this spring; the 6 birds was the best spring number since the 7 in 2004. A fem at WGP 19-21 Apr (RS, PS, m.ob.) was 2nd-earliest on record; males were at FF 2 May (RG), Hickory Hills, Sarpy Co, 3 May (MWi), WP 5 May (DL), Otoe Co 13 May (JGi), and 2 were heard at ICSP 19 May by an observer experienced with the species (LA).

**American Redstart:** Reports were routine for this common eastern migrant, uncommon west.

**Cape May Warbler:** There were about 8 birds reported, a good showing for this rare migrant. Notable was a male that pleased many viewers at Towl Park,



Omaha, 9 May (JR, m.ob.); it remained a few days and may have been in the group of 3 there 11 May (Sma, m.ob.) and one of the 2 seen on 15 May (PR, KDy). A fem was seen by several NOU members at the Spring Meeting as it showed well near the Wetland Center at FF 17 May (BP, m.ob.). The others were singles in a Bellevue yard 4 May, rather early (KCR), at PL 11 May (JK, MW), and in Cedar Co 11 May (DT).

**Cerulean Warbler:** Three were reported, a "stunning, singing male" at WP 7 May (MW), one "back again" (CNK) at FF 10-15 May (CNK, GR, SB), and one at ICSP 19 May (LA).

**Northern Parula:** A male persisted in Scotts Bluff Co 3-21 May (KD, AD, AK, MS, photo), the 18th for the Panhandle in spring. Another westerly bird was in Ogallala 4 May (JO, photo). Best counts were as expected at ICSP: 11 there 26 Apr (JR) and 10 on 5 May (JGJ). High counts are 17-25.

**Magnolia Warbler:** There were a good number of reports from the east 6-23 May (m.ob.); the 5 at Nebraska City 11 May (JGJ) tied the third-highest spring count after the high of 7 (twice). Westerly was one in Perkins Co 2 May (AW). This species occurs westward with some regularity; there are 18 Panhandle records.

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** This spring was the best for the species in many years; usually it is about as rare in spring as Cape May Warbler. No fewer than 12 were reported, including 2 males and a fem on 17 May at FF (GR, m.ob.). There were 2 reports of 2 birds: in Riverside Park, Nebraska City, 13 May (JGi) and at Hormel Park, Fremont, 16 May (males, CNK). Other reports were of a male at WP 8 May (MW), one at FF 9 May (NF), one on the Sarpy Co Spring Count 10 May (CNK), a male at PL 11-16 May (JK, MW, LE), and one in a Bellevue yard 15 May (L&BP).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** Eight were reported 7-25 May (m.ob.), an average migration.

**Yellow Warbler:** One at WP 20 Apr (MW) was rather early; early dates in the east are 16-18 Apr.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** About 25 were reported 8-25 May (m.ob.), a better-than-average showing; all reports were from the east.

**Blackpoll Warbler:** This species is a fairly common statewide spring migrant, less so in the west; the 12 in western Nebraska 21-23 May (JGJ) was a typical western tally.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** This is a rare spring migrant statewide, with only 27 records in all prior to this spring, when there were a surprising 3 more: singles were in Sarpy Co 17 May (ARy), Washington Co 17 May (JJ), and at FF 18 May (fem, LE, details).

**Palm Warbler:** More than usual were reported, about 26 birds 22 Apr-20 May (m.ob.). The eastern subspecies *Setophaga palmarum hypochrysea*, with entirely yellowish (rather than white) underparts, is a rare migrant in the east; a careful observer decided that one of 3 birds in Pawnee Co 4 May was of the western subspecies *S. p. palmarum*, despite its almost completely yellowish underparts (TEL).

**Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler:** At the eastern edge of the expected migration corridor, singles were in Custer Co 20 Apr (LR, RH) and Lincoln Co 10 May (TJW).

**Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler:** A few attempt to overwinter in the southeast, but there are only about 20 records for Feb, and so early Mar sightings are likely migrants; 2 were in Platte Co 9 Mar (WF) and 2 at BOL 13 Mar (RSt). There are only 3 previous Mar dates prior to 9 Mar.

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** All reports were from FF, the only known breeding site; first reported was 15 Apr (JC, SS), and peak count was 3, on both 18 and 22 Apr (JR, RS).

**Prairie Warbler:** Only the 18th spring record was one at PL 11 May (JK, MW, details).

**Townsend's Warbler:** This species is rare in spring, but surprisingly, the only documented spring record is from the east, and all but 3 of the remaining 10 records for the state are from central Nebraska. A male was well seen in Platte Co 3 May; it was matched to a field guide description with the bird in view, but unfortunately, other than its gender, there was no description of the bird provided.

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** An average migration had about 9 birds reported 4-18 May in the east (m.ob.). Unexpected was one westerly in Kimball 20 May (JGJ), only the 3rd for the Panhandle; there is a single record for Keith Co.

**Canada Warbler:** Arrival was earlier than usual for this typically late migrant; singles were in a Bellevue yard 6 May (KCR) and at Hormel Park, Fremont, 8 May (GR). Most surprising was an even earlier bird in Scotts Bluff Co 4 May (AD, details), the first spring Panhandle report and only the 16th in spring away from the Missouri River Valley. In all, 9 were reported 4-25 Apr (m.ob.).

**Wilson's Warbler:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide migrant.

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Very recently there has been a moderate increase in easterly reports. It is not known which subspecies is involved; as of 2001 the eastern subspecies was thought to have been extirpated in the east (*Birds of Nebraska*). This spring no fewer than 3 were reported in the Missouri River Valley: singles in Omaha 16 May (EBe), southeast Washington Co 18 May (JR), and 2 at ICSP 30 May (JR).

**Green-tailed Towhee:** None of this rare Panhandle migrant were reported.

**Spotted Towhee:** Reports were routine for this uncommon statewide migrant.

**Eastern Towhee:** Some good counts in FF and at ICSP may have been a lingering effect of brush piles caused by the massive 2011 flood at those locations (JR); 16 were at FF 2 May (JR) and 12 at ICSP 26 Apr (JR). The apparent introgression of Eastern Towhee genes in Scotts Bluff Co was marked this spring by photos of eastern-like birds with minimal back spotting but singing eastern songs, as well as at least one phenotypically pure male in the observer's yard 12 May (KD).

**American Tree Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide winter visitor and migrant.

- Chipping Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide summer resident and common migrant.
- Clay-colored Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.
- Brewer's Sparrow:** The 8 near North Platte 15 Apr (TJW) were rather early; early dates are (were) 10-15 Apr.
- Field Sparrow:** One in Loup Co, central Nebraska, 19 Apr (MUs) was rather early there; early dates in the west are 15-20 Apr, but in the east begin 20 Mar.
- Vesper Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.
- Lark Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.
- Lark Bunting:** A surprise was a male in southeastern Washington Co 20 May (JJ); this is the 13th record since 1981 in the southeast.
- Savannah Sparrow:** Two in Lancaster Co 15 Mar (LE) were likely early migrants; early dates are 9-11 Mar.
- Grasshopper Sparrow:** One was rather early for the location in Loup Co 11 Apr (RK, RM); farther west, in the Panhandle, early dates are 27 Apr-1 May.
- Baird's Sparrow:** This species is probably a regular migrant through Nebraska, but is difficult to find and identify when not singing. There are only 14 documented spring records statewide 24 Apr-23 May. Intriguing this spring was a report of 2 in Otoe Co on the rather early date of 11 Apr (SQ, LF, details). Early date in Kansas for Baird's is 6 Apr, and in Nebraska early dates for the similar Grasshopper Sparrow are 26-31 Mar. Identifying silent Grasshopper and Baird's Sparrows can be challenging.
- Henslow's Sparrow:** This species is locally common, but only in a few favored locations. Burchard Lake SRA, Pawnee Co, and neighboring private prairie, as well as Pawnee Prairie WMA, Pawnee Co, and SCP are the most accessible sites. In the Burchard L SRA area 10-13 were found 29 May (WRS, CG, LN); 2-4 were on the SRA 31 May (MW, TG, photos).
- Le Conte's Sparrow:** None were reported of this fairly common eastern migrant.
- Nelson's Sparrow:** One at Jack Sinn 24 Apr (MW, details) was record early by a day.
- Fox Sparrow:** A grayish "Red" Fox Sparrow photographed in Morrill Co 18 Apr (AKF photo; fide JGJ) was the first record of this eastern subspecies for the Panhandle, although it had characteristics of the grayish birds intermediate between eastern and Rocky Mountain birds sometimes referred to as *Passerella iliaca altivagans*. There have been a few records in recent years of these grayish birds, which are likely to migrate through Nebraska.
- Song Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant.
- Lincoln's Sparrow:** One at Neale Woods, Douglas Co, 8 Mar (MW, EA) was very early and possibly wintered.
- Swamp Sparrow:** One that wintered at PL likely accounted for reports there through 20 Mar (LE, GR); another at Wehrspann L, Sarpy Co, 9 Mar (Sma) also likely wintered. Migrants generally arrive in late Mar.
- White-throated Sparrow:** Rare in the west in spring, the only Panhandle report was from Scotts Bluff Co 4 May (KD).
- Harris's Sparrow:** Only one was reported from the west, where the species is rare: it was in Scotts Bluff Co 7 May (DF).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** Rare in mid-winter in the southeast, 5 at Boyer Chute NWR, Washington Co, 4 Mar (JR) had likely wintered there.

**Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco:** None were reported of this fairly common summer resident, and uncommon winter visitor and migrant in the Panhandle.

**Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco:** There were 6 reports of singles in May (JGJ, NM, WF), last ones in Johnson Co 6 May (WF) and at ICSP 19 May (LA, details). Latest dates are in early Jun.

**Dark-eyed (Cassiar) Junco:** As observers better scrutinize juncos, it is becoming clear that the Dark-eyed (Cassiar) Junco occurs uncommonly but regularly in the state; singles were in Omaha 11 Mar (SMa), in Sarpy Co 16 Mar (EB), and in Bellevue 6 Apr (fide WRS). A male and female were photographed in Lincoln Co 18 Mar (VC, photo). This form is thought to be a stable intergrade population of Oregon and Slate-colored forms.

**Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco:** This form is rare in the east; a single was in Nebraska City 5 and 27 Mar (SQ) and another in Omaha 16 Mar (SMa).

**Dark-eyed (Pink-sided) Junco:** This species does not occur each year in the east, where brightly-colored Oregon Juncos are sometimes misidentified as Pink-sideds. However, two experienced observers found single birds at BOL 15 Mar (JK) and at Wehrspann L, Sarpy Co, 1 Apr (CNK). Two birds photographed in Lincoln Co 18 Mar (VC) were of interest; best guess was that they were intergrades of Oregon and Pink-sided forms.

**Summer Tanager:** One at ICSP 26 Apr (JR) was rather early; early dates are 23-25 Apr. Westerly was an imm male photographed at LM 11 May (JBe).

**Scarlet Tanager:** Reports were routine for this fairly common eastern migrant and summer resident.

**Western Tanager:** Only the 10th and 11th Missouri River Valley records were a single in a Bellevue yard 28 Apr-3 May (KCR, CNK photo, L&BP) and one in Omaha 17 May (LBr, details).

**Northern Cardinal:** Reports continued from recently-established Panhandle North Platte River Valley populations in Scotts Bluff (AD) and Morrill (JJ) Cos.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Westerly for spring migrants were one in Scotts Bluff Co 6 May (AK), where rare, and 3 in Lincoln Co 20 May (SA), where uncommon.

**Black-headed Grosbeak:** As is the trend in recent years, there were multiple reports of easterly birds, one of which was rather early in southeastern Washington Co 28 Apr (LBl, details). Early dates for the state are 23-24 Apr. The other easterly reports were of one in Bellevue 16 May (LBr) and a male in Johnson Co 24 May (PL).

**Blue Grosbeak:** Reports were routine for this uncommon statewide migrant and summer resident.

**Lazuli Bunting:** As with Black-headed Grosbeak, recent years have seen more easterly reports in spring; this year there were at least 9 birds reported 6-18 May (m.ob.); since 2008 there have been 30 reported in the east.

**Indigo Bunting:** The 3 separate singles that arrived 26 Apr were rather early; early dates are 23-25 Apr. They were in Omaha (KF), at ICSP (JR), and in Lancaster Co (VK).

- Dickcissel:** As in recent years, there were spring reports from the west, where at least one was in each of Scotts Bluff and Banner Cos 31 May (AK); in the past Dickcissels popped up in the west on occasion but usually in June at the earliest. Early dates in the west are 23-25 May.
- Bobolink:** Two in Saunders Co 28 Apr (JGJ) were rather early; early dates are 28-30 Apr. There is an earlier documented record on 20 Apr (a banded bird) and 4 undocumented records, all probably correct, in the period 20-24 Apr.
- Red-winged Blackbird:** By far a record spring count, the 100,000 at Jack Sinn 5 Apr (JK) tripled the previous high.
- Eastern Meadowlark:** Reports were routine for this common eastern migrant and summer resident, uncommon and local westward.
- Western Meadowlark:** Reports were routine for this common statewide migrant and summer resident.
- Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Early arrivals are single males, usually with Red-winged Blackbirds. Early dates are in late Feb, but one in Saunders Co 10 Mar (GR) and another at Jack Sinn 13 Mar (GR) were on the early side. "Big flocks" had arrived in Platte Co by 10 Apr (MN). Fems arrive later; a single-gender flock was in Hamilton Co 7 May (CNK).
- Rusty Blackbird:** There were several reports 13 Mar-24 Apr (m.ob.); best counts were 23 in Seward Co 26 Mar (LE) and 20 in Cedar Co 19 Mar (DT). In all, some 90 birds were reported.
- Brewer's Blackbird:** An impressive 300 on a recent burn at PSP 25 Apr (BFH) tied the high count in the east, and another large group of 250 was at a Butler Co burn the same day (JGJ). This species is uncommon in the east, but, as well as these two high counts, there were 8 other reports from the east, for a total of 615 birds.
- Common Grackle:** One in Scotts Bluff Co 16 Mar (AK) was rather early for the west; there are a few late Feb dates there, however.
- Great-tailed Grackle:** The 100 at Jack Sinn 11 Mar (LE) was a good count; high counts are 150-250.
- Brown-headed Cowbird:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide migrant and common statewide summer resident.
- Orchard Oriole:** One in Cass Co 26 Apr (SQ) was rather early; early dates are 21-24 Apr.
- Hooded Oriole:** Intriguing was a report of an oriole with an "orange head", one of several orioles at an oriole feeder tray in Moorefield, Frontier Co, 30 Apr 2014 (SGr); no further details were provided, although a Hooded Oriole was photographed 1 May in Douglas Co, KS.
- Bullock's Oriole:** Somewhat easterly were singles at LM 11 May (JBe) and in Lincoln Co 15 May (LDe); surprisingly, these are only the 8th and 9th records east of the Panhandle in spring.
- Baltimore Oriole:** Reports were routine of this common eastern migrant, uncommon west.
- Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch:** None were reported of this uncommon western Panhandle winter visitor; last dates are in Mar.
- House Finch:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide resident.

**Purple Finch:** After a winter of low numbers, there were only 8 reports, none of more than 2 birds (m.ob.)

**Red Crossbill:** Reports were routine for this common western resident and migrant, uncommon elsewhere.

**Common Redpoll:** None were reported; the prior winter had very few reported.

**Pine Siskin:** Few were reported, again following a low-numbers winter; only one was found in Scotts Bluff Co, that on 10 May (AK).

**Lesser Goldfinch:** Recent years of increasing numbers of this species have shown that arrival of this species is in late May; a male was in a Mitchell yard 25 May (KD, MW) and a single was at Wildcat Hills NC 31 May (KD, AK).

**American Goldfinch:** "Hundreds" at the PSP feeders 8 Mar (MB) was a good estimate; high counts are 200-300.

**Evening Grosbeak:** The only report was of a male and fem at a North Platte feeder 7 Mar (GH fide TJW); the fem was still present 10 Mar (TJW).

**House Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.

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### Double-crested Cormorant and American White Pelican Abundance at Sandhills Lakes During Fall Migration

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Double-crested Cormorants (DCCO, *Phalacrocorax auritus*) and American White Pelicans (AWPE, *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) are migratory piscivorous birds that breed in North America. Both species are abundant spring and fall migrants in Nebraska. DCCOs are also common, albeit local, breeders in northwestern Nebraska (Sharpe et al. 2001). DCCO and AWPE numbers have increased throughout their range in recent decades (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] 2003, Sauer et al. 2013). Both species, but primarily DCCOs, have become increasingly controversial because of increased numbers and also because their principal food source is fish, a resource humans value. Concentrations of DCCOs, and to a lesser extent those of AWPEs, can impact small impoundments such as aquaculture facilities and are suspected of reducing sportfish populations on recreational water bodies (Erwin 1995, King 2005, Trapp et al. 1997, USFWS 2003, Seefelt and Gillingham 2006, Groen and Steinwand 2010).

Localized conflicts between humans and DCCOs and AWPEs have occurred regularly at fish hatcheries and have occasionally been reported at small water bodies in Nebraska (Richard Holland, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, personal communication). We define a conflict as a situation where DCCOs and/or AWPEs

have adverse effects on humans and/or human resources. These localized conflicts between humans and DCCOs and/or AWPEs are readily identified because such instances occur at commercial fish hatcheries and result in property loss. However, DCCOs and AWPEs are suspected to negatively impact sportfish resources at large water bodies in North America, including those that serve as commercial and recreational public fisheries (Trapp et al. 1997, Dorr et al. 2010). Similar concerns have been expressed about recreational public fisheries at Sandhills lakes in Nebraska (Richard Holland, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, personal communication).

Even though DCCOs and AWPEs are known as abundant migrants in Nebraska, existing information is not sufficient to assess whether numbers during migration are at a level that could impact sportfish resources at Sandhills lakes. We studied DCCO and AWPE occurrence and abundance at Sandhills lakes during the 2012 fall migration.

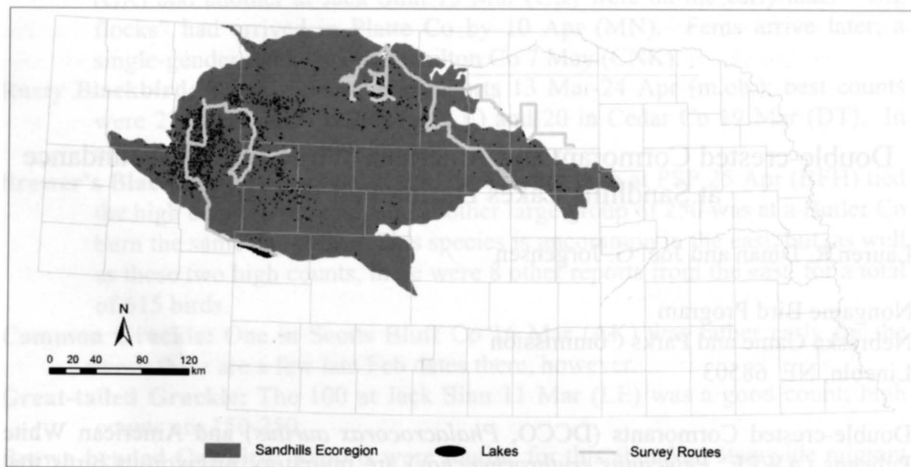


Figure 1. Study area and survey routes – the dark gray area shows the Sandhills ecoregion, the black dots show all lakes within the ecoregion, and the bold light gray lines show the two survey routes.

## METHODS

We identified the Sandhills ecoregion, more precisely Sandhills lakes, as our study area (Figure 1). The Sandhills ecoregion covers approximately 12,100,000 acres (4,900,000 hectares) and includes nearly 2,000 shallow lakes (Schneider et al. 2011). We divided the study area into an east and a west region and used ArcGIS (version 9.3) to develop a survey route in each region (Figure 1). We designed routes along public roads in each region; all lakes within a one kilometer distance from the road were selected to be surveyed. Five priority areas included in the study were Lake McConaughy, Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Calamus Reservoir,

Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, and Merritt Reservoir. We selected survey routes that included priority areas and minimized distance traveled, while maximizing the number of lakes less than one kilometer from the road, the number of public fishing lakes, and the proportion of lakes greater than 160 acres (65 hectares). The west region route consisted of 81 lakes including Lake McConaughy and Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge. The east region route consisted of 63 lakes including Calamus Reservoir, Merritt Reservoir, and Valentine National Wildlife Refuge.

We initiated our study in mid-August, which corresponds with the arrival of migrant DCCOs in Nebraska during fall migration (Sharpe et al. 2001). We conducted a two-day survey of each route once a month from August through October 2012. The majority of lakes along each route were surveyed three times, once each month. A small number of lakes (26) were only surveyed twice. We surveyed small to medium-sized lakes (< 900 acres or < 365 hectares) from the nearest one to three access locations depending on the lake size and accessibility. Large lakes and reservoirs were surveyed from all available access points. We visually scanned each lake using binoculars and conducted counts using a spotting scope. We recorded DCCO and AWPE presence/absence and the number of each species present.

#### DATA SUMMARIZATION

We categorized all lakes in the study area by type and size. We identified three lake types: reservoirs, public fishing lakes, and other lakes. We defined public fishing lakes as lakes with public fishing access excluding reservoirs. We defined other lakes as all lakes in the Sandhills ecoregion that did not fit the other two categories; this included privately owned lakes that may or may not have fishing and publicly owned lakes that do not allow fishing. We categorized lakes by size using the following five size categories:  $\geq 1000$  acres, 700 – 999 acres, 400 – 699 acres, 100 – 399 acres, and < 100 acres. We determined the proportion of lakes in each size and type category included in the study.

We produced three metrics: presence/absence, abundance, and density to summarize DCCO and AWPE occurrence at Sandhills lakes. We considered each lake as a data point in these analyses. We calculated the percentage of lakes with DCCOs present and the percentage of lakes with AWPEs present by lake type and size. We constructed histograms showing DCCO and AWPE abundance and density at Sandhills lakes. We summarized DCCO and AWPE abundance temporally by adding all individuals recorded, for each species, by month to show the period within fall migration when the largest concentrations were present in the Sandhills ecoregion.



## RESULTS

We conducted surveys from 7 August to 16 October 2012. We made a total of 406 lake surveys; 118 lakes were surveyed three times and 26 lakes were surveyed twice. We surveyed 100% of reservoirs (Lake McConaughy, Calamus and Merritt Reservoirs), 77% of public fishing lakes, and 6% of “other lakes” in our study area. We surveyed 93% of the lakes larger than 400 acres. We found 24% of lakes surveyed were dry; these lakes were all small, shallow, “other lakes” and smaller than 100 acres.

Table 1. Number and percent of lakes surveyed with DCCOs and AWPEs present, by lake type and size.

Categories	Number Surveyed	Number with DCCOs	Percent with DCCOs	Number with AWPEs	Percent with AWPEs
<b>Lake Type</b>					
Reservoirs	9	5	56%	5	56%
Public Fishing Lakes	77	34	44%	17	22%
Other Lakes	320	39	12%	31	10%
<b>Lake Size</b>					
≥ 1000 acres	9	5	56%	5	56%
700 – 999 acres	9	4	44%	3	33%
400 – 699 acres	24	15	63%	13	54%
100 – 399 acres	94	27	29%	17	18%
< 100 acres	270	27	10%	15	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>13%</b>

Out of 406 lake surveys, 19% had DCCOs present and 13% had AWPEs present (Table 1). DCCOs and AWPEs were absent on the majority of the lake surveys; most lakes with DCCOs and/or AWPEs had relatively small groups present (< 50, Figure 2). The only lake with greater than 300 DCCOs during any survey was Calamus Reservoir, where 7500 DCCOs were estimated to be present on 15 October; 88% of all DCCOs recorded during the study were at Calamus Reservoir. Calamus Reservoir also had the largest concentration of AWPEs, with an estimated 1490

AWPEs observed on 15 October. However, AWPEs were more evenly distributed across lake types with the largest proportion of AWPEs observed at “other lakes”.

Out of 406 lake surveys, 389 (96%) had less than 0.1 DCCO per acre (Figure 3). The highest density of DCCOs was observed at Calamus Reservoir (1.3 DCCOs per acre) on 15 October. All other lakes had less than 0.6 DCCOs per acre with the exception of a small lake with 0.9 DCCOs per acre on 18 September; this lake was approximately eight acres and had seven DCCOs present.

Out of 406 lake surveys, 382 (94%) had less than 0.1 AWPEs per acre (Figure 3). The highest density of AWPEs (3.7 AWPEs per acre) was observed at Little Hay Lake, a 27 acre lake at Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, on 27 August. Seven lakes had greater than one AWPE per acre; most of which were “other lakes” with the exception of one public fishing lake at Avocet Wildlife Management Area.

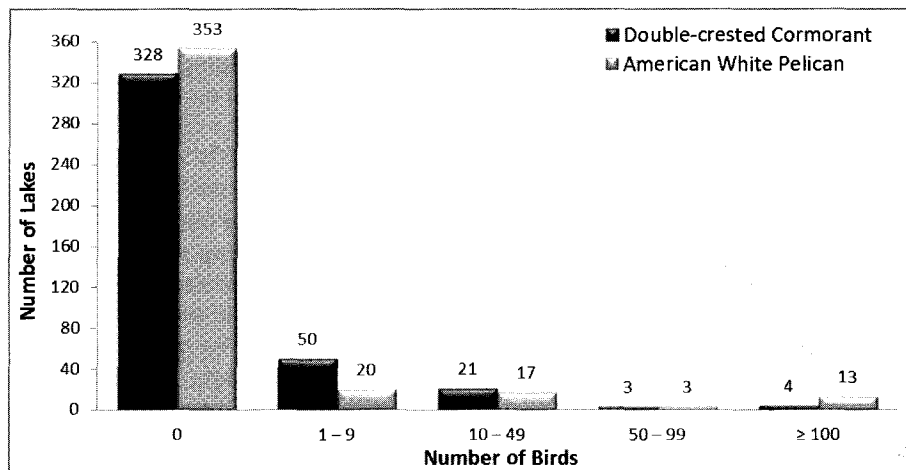


Figure 2. Frequency of DCCO and AWPE abundance (counts) at Sandhill Lakes.

DCCO numbers increased 20 fold from August to October with the largest number of DCCOs being observed in October (Table 2). In August, 66% of DCCOs were observed on “other lakes”. In September and October, most DCCOs were observed on reservoirs (82% in September and 97% in October). We observed the largest number of AWPEs in September (Table 2).

## DISCUSSION

Fish are a private economic interest when produced commercially for food and stocking. Fish are also a public resource when they occur in public waters and are harvested through recreational fishing. Piscivorous birds feed on fish and,

conceivably, large concentrations of piscivorous birds may cause negative impacts on these resources (Erwin 1995, King 2005, Trapp et al. 1997, USFWS 2003, Seefelt and Gillingham 2006, Groen and Steinwand 2010). All native piscivorous birds that occur in the United States are protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (USFWS 2003). Thus, conflicts naturally arise when piscivorous species occur in large concentrations or increase substantially in overall numbers. The DCCO is the piscivorous bird species most frequently identified as causing negative impacts to both public and private resources (USFWS 2003). The AWPE is another piscivorous bird identified, albeit much less frequently and with much less vigor, as causing negative impacts to both public and private resources. DCCOs and AWPEs occur commonly and occasionally in concentrations in Nebraska. Fishing interests have raised concerns about DCCO and AWPE impacts on private and public fish resources in Nebraska, particularly relatively shallow Sandhills lakes (Richard Holland, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, personal communication).

This study found that large concentrations (i.e., >100 birds) of DCCOs and AWPEs occur infrequently and locally in the Sandhills Ecoregion during fall migration. DCCOs were found in concentrations of over 300 individuals at only one of the 144 lakes visited in this study. Calamus Reservoir had the largest overall number and highest density of DCCOs; almost eight times (7.6) more DCCOs were at Calamus Reservoir than the total number present at all other reservoirs, public fishing lakes, and “other lakes” combined. Our results suggest Calamus Reservoir is an important

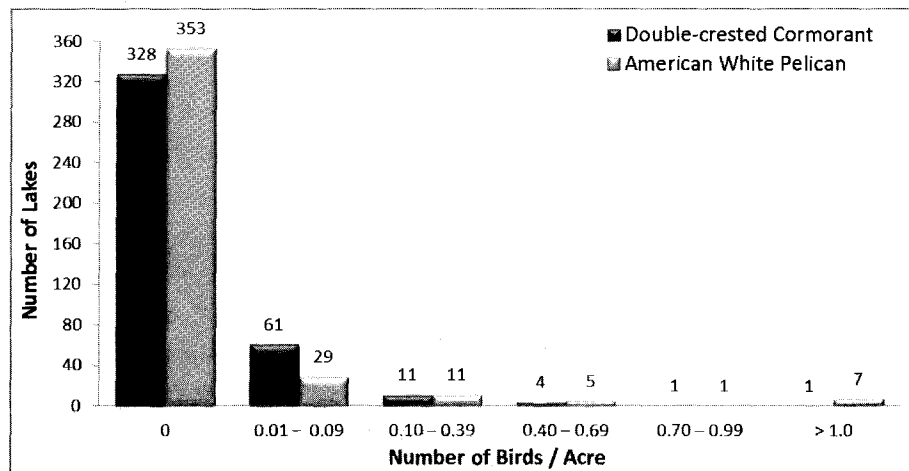


Figure 3. Frequency of DCCO and AWPE density (number/acre) at Sandhill Lake.

staging area for DCCOs during fall migration. Large concentrations were not observed on public fishing lakes or “other lakes”. The largest number of DCCOs recorded on a public fishing lake was 80 at Crescent Lake on 10 October. The largest number of DCCOs recorded on “other lakes” was 113 on Goose Lake, Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge, on 7 August. However, it should be noted

that a renovated island in Goose Lake supported a breeding colony and adults and near-fledged or fledged juveniles were observed here during the August survey.

In August, the majority of DCCOs were widely distributed in small concentrations at “other lakes”. Concentrations were not observed at any lake, with the exception of Goose Lake. During the September surveys DCCO numbers increased on public fishing lakes and reservoirs, but decreased on “other lakes”. DCCO numbers peaked in October with a dramatic increase in the numbers observed at Calamus Reservoir. Calamus Reservoir was visited by Jorgensen on 12 November and fewer than 500 DCCOs were present. This additional observation suggests that the October survey recorded peak or near-peak numbers at Calamus Reservoir.

Table 2. Number of DCCOs and AWPEs observed in the Sandhills Ecoregion during fall migration 2012.

Month	DCCO	AWPE
August	387	1746
September	1832	2494
October	8035	2048
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10254</b>	<b>6288</b>

AWPEs were much more evenly distributed across all three lake types. The lake with the largest number of AWPEs was Calamus Reservoir, but some medium-sized public fishing and other lakes had a higher density of AWPEs than Calamus Reservoir. We observed a small number of public fishing lakes (2) and “other lakes” (2) that had between 200 and 500 AWPEs present. AWPE numbers were much more consistent throughout fall migration when compared to DCCOs. AWPE numbers peaked slightly in September.

This study of DCCOs and AWPEs in the Nebraska Sandhills during fall migration provides important preliminary information that can be used to evaluate these species' status. Our results do not provide evidence that Sandhills lakes commonly or routinely host large concentrations (>100 individuals) of DCCOs or AWPEs. Indeed, our results show that most lakes did not have any DCCOs or AWPEs present during fall migration. With an absence of any large concentrations or even individuals, it is highly improbable that either of these piscivorous bird species are negatively impacting public fishing resources in the Sandhills Ecoregion. Our study, however, did not extend into spring migration and bird numbers may be different during that season. Calamus Reservoir was the exception and it appears to be a major staging area for DCCOs during fall migration. NGPC Fisheries Division personnel did not express concerns about large concentrations of DCCOs impacting sportfish resources at Calamus Reservoir because it is believed those birds are feeding mostly on gizzard shad (*Dorosoma cepedianum*) and because lake depth allows fish to avoid capture from diving birds.

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### What are Blue Ross's Geese?

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The existence of blue morph ("phase") Ross's Geese (*Chen rossii*) was first well documented by McLandress & McLandress (1979). They reported on several blue-morph birds seen and collected in California and Canada that morphologically appeared to be pure Ross's Geese and on others with intermediate traits that appeared to be hybrids with Lesser Snow Geese (*Chen caerulescens caerulescens*). They also noted that in the California wintering grounds counts held during 1976-77 there were only 3 blue morphs (0.008 percent) among the 38,825 Ross's Geese counted. At that time, only 0.02 percent of the Lesser Snow Geese wintering in California were blue morph, but sightings of blue-morph geese from central Canada were by then already slowly increasing in frequency (Dzubin 1979). Blue-morph Lesser Snow Geese currently represent about 25 percent of the Central Flyway flock of several million Lesser Snow Geese (Johnsgard 2012).

At the same time, Ross's Geese have expanded their breeding range eastwardly across Hudson Bay, and now probably comprise at least two percent of the mixed Snow/Ross's Goose flocks that migrate through Nebraska (Johnsgard 2012). Assuming that about 4.6 million Snow Geese were in the mid-continent flock during the 2013 winter surveys (U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service 2013), there might be at least 90,000 Ross's Geese in the Central Flyway, and there may be far more. In the west-central population of 725,000 "light geese" that passes through the high plains, nearly a third counted during the 2013 winter survey were Ross's Geese.

McLandress & McLandress (1979) suggested that those birds intermediate in body size and bill structure with blue-morph Lesser Snow Geese are probably the result of hybridization (Table 1). As in Lesser Snow Geese, blue plumage coloration in Ross's Geese is likely controlled by a dominant gene. Thus, blue-plumaged birds having typical Ross's Goose morphology might have resulted from back-crossing, or from recurrent mutations associated with a presumed polymorphic common ancestor of Ross's and Snow Geese. (Cooke and Cooch 1968)

Among a sample of nearly 12,000 Ross's Geese and Lesser Snow Geese from Canada and the U.S., Trauger et al. (1971) identified 32 morphologically intermediate birds. Using various population data, they estimated that 0.2–4.8 percent of the Ross's Geese in the Mississippi and Central Flyways might be hybrids. Later studies (1989–1992) suggest that the incidence of hybrids among Ross's Goose flocks is about 1.9 percent (Ryder and Alisaukis 1995).

Table 1. Measurements of Ross's Geese, Intermediates and Lesser Snow Geese.

Taxon	Sample	Culmen, mm. (avg.)	Wing, mm. (avg.)*	Source
Ross's Goose				
Adult Male	47	37-46 (41)	371-411 (394.8)	Trauger, et al., 1971
Adult Female	32	34-41 (38.5)	362-391 (376.0)	Trauger, et al., 1971
Ross's Goose (Blue)				
Adult Male	1	41.1	380	McLandress & McLandress, 1979
Intermediate				
Adult Male	4	40-48 (45.1)	414-419 (415.8)	Trauger, et al., 1971
Adult Female	4	45-50 (46.6)	382-404 (393.5)	Trauger, et al., 1971
Lesser Snow Goose				
Adult Male	32	53-61 (56.2)	428-474 (449.0)	Trauger, et al., 1971
Adult Female	36	50-59 (53.5)	438-461 (430.2)	Trauger, et al., 1971

\* Measurements are from flattened wings

The recent eastward expansion of nesting by Ross's Geese has increased breeding contacts with Lesser Snow Geese. By 2005, about 1,500 pairs of Ross's Geese were nesting on the western coastal tundra of Hudson Bay south of Cape Churchill, Manitoba, (now part of Wapusk National Park). The colony is now surrounded by nesting Lesser Snow Geese, and some mixed pairings have been observed. Furthermore, many clutches having eggs of both species have been found in various nesting areas used by both species (Trauger et al. 1971), the offspring of which might possibly imprint on and later mate with the "wrong" species.

Assuming hybrid matings are similar to matings within the species, it is likely that there are preferential matings among birds of the same plumage type in hybrid matings. In the Manitoba Lesser Snow Goose colony, where about 30 percent of the birds are blue-morph, random mate choice should result in 42 percent of the matings occurring between mixed-morph birds, whereas the actual incidence is 15 percent (Rockwell et al. 2009). Such same-morph mating preferences would presumably reduce the frequency of blue-morph hybrids to less than half of random expectations. Assuming 1.9 percent of Ross's Geese on mixed-species breeding grounds are hybrids, and that preferential same-morph mating occurs as in Lesser Snow Geese, blue-phase hybrids might thus be expected to result from about 15 percent of these mixed pairings, producing about three blue-morph hybrids per thousand Ross's Geese. Of course not all nesting grounds of Ross's Geese are of mixed-species composition, so the actual incidence is much lower.

At least two sightings of blue-morph Ross's Geese have been reported in Nebraska: one seen near Pierce in March of 1994 (Gubanyi 1996) and one in Stanton County in February, 1998, (Sharpe et al. 2001). There is also at least one South Dakota record of a blue-morph Ross's Goose and one of an apparent hybrid (Tallman et al. 2002). There are few other regional records, although David Trauger captured a probable hybrid in northwest Missouri during 1967 (Trauger et al. 1971), and I photographed an apparent white-morph hybrid among a flock of Lesser Snow Geese at Missouri's Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge in 2012.

One conspicuous plumage feature of purported blue-morph Ross's Geese is that the neck, back and scapular feathers are brownish black, with black foreneck feathers extending up to the throat and on the hindneck to the top of the crown, sometimes leaving only a white chin patch similar to that of a Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*). This blackish dorsal color contrasts sharply with a (usually) white belly, hindquarters and wing-coverts, and with conspicuously white-edged secondary and tertial feathers.

The National Geographic and Sibley field guides similarly illustrate blue-morph Ross's Geese as having darker neck, back and breast coloration than do typical (homozygotic) blue-morph Snow Geese, but with contrasting white underparts. Some of the birds illustrated on the internet exhibit more dusky underparts, which might suggest that their Snow Goose parentage was homozygous for the blue gene, rather than being of the heterozygous (white-bellied) phenotype.



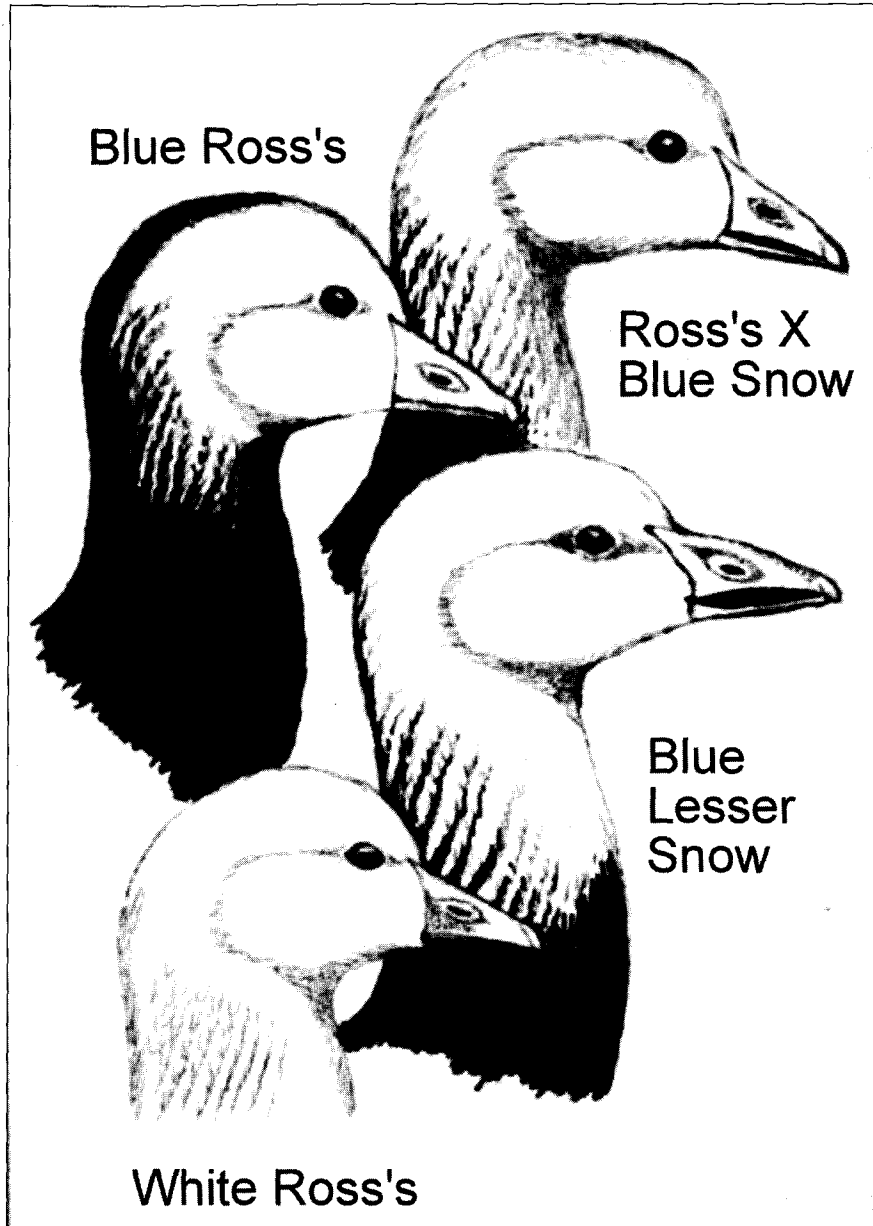


Figure 1. Adult plumage of blue-morph Ross's Goose (top left), showing dark foreneck feathers extending up to chin and dark hindneck feathers extending to top of crown, with little or no "grin patch" on stubby bill; white-morph Ross's Goose (bottom left); hybrid Ross's Goose x blue-morph Lesser Snow Goose (top right), showing less white on throat and crown and intermediate-sized "grin patch"; and blue-morph Lesser Snow Goose (bottom right), showing white throat and crown, wide "grin patch". Drawing by Paul Johnsgard, based on photos and specimens.

Photos of many putative blue-morph Ross's Geese that have been posted on the internet (<http://www.oceanwanderers.com/BlueGoose.html>) indicate that the bill structures of these birds are essentially identical to those of typical Ross's Geese, lacking black "grinning patches" along the mandibular junctions, and having a bluish gray and variably caruncled bill surface. By comparison, in presumptive hybrids the bill has a narrow black "grinning patch", and is smooth and only slightly grayish basally. The accompanying drawing (Fig. 1) is based on a variety of photographic sources, and is drawn to scale.

Because of the rapidly increasing abundance of Ross's Geese in the mid-continent light goose population (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 2013), there are ever-greater chances of Nebraska birders encountering probable white-morph hybrids, or blue-morph birds closely resembling Ross's geese. Future field observations should provide some clues as to what is occurring in this dynamic genetic and evolutionary phenomenon.

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## 2014 NOU/IOU Joint Meeting in Bellevue

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The May 16-18 combined meeting of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union and the Iowa Ornithologists' Union at Fontenelle Forest Nature Center in Bellevue, Nebraska, was a gigantic success. Over 160 birders from Nebraska, Iowa, and 6 other states attended the 3 day event. Everyone I talked to, from novice to expert, was more than delighted with all of the activities scheduled for this event.

Our Friday evening speaker Ty Smedes had some wonderful photos, especially of warblers, and I heard nothing but positive comments about his program from the attendees. On Saturday afternoon Jerry Toll talked about his experiences banding Red-tailed Hawks at the Hitchcock Nature Center near Crescent, Iowa, and Rick Hollis spoke about the importance of eBird. Saturday evening, Dan Svingen gave us some extremely valuable information regarding the status of many of our Great Plains grassland birds and made everyone feel welcome to come and bird in our nation's national grasslands, especially in South and North Dakota.

What I think made most people happy were the answers to two of the most important questions to birders: Were there birds to see? And how was the weather? To the first question the answer is a resounding YES – 181 species counted: that number included 29 warbler, 24 shorebird, 10 flycatcher and 6 vireo species. To the second question the answer is again a resounding YES (no rain, wind or extremely high temperatures). Or as Goldilocks might have said, everything was 'just right'.

Despite the high overall count of species, there were some obvious misses that could have pushed the total easily as high as 190. For example, here are some of the species that were missed: Great Horned Owl, Screech Owl, Great Egret ( I saw one 2 days before the count started), Avocet, Willet (I saw 3 two days after the count), Upland Sandpiper, Grasshopper Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Palm Warbler..... and others.

The organization of this large gathering went off like clockwork. Betty Grenon had all of the meals and box lunches scheduled accurately, and the food was delicious. Dave Heidt did a great job of organizing the field trips, Paul Roisen (who is also good with a microphone and president of IOU) dealt well with the parking issues and made sure the field trips got off on time. And again Betty Grenon (for NOU) and Cecile and Denny Thompson (for both IOU and NOU) made registration run very smoothly with no snafus. Rick Schmid was accommodating when it came to the facilities and making sure all of the electronic equipment was working smoothly.

Field trips were led by Elliott Bedows, Keith Dyche, Clem Klaphake, Robert, Joe and Sam Manning, Neal Ratzlaff, Al Reyer, Justin Rink, Gary Roberts, Paul Roisen, Rick Schmid, Ross Silcock, Phil Swanson, and Jerry Toll. Field trip destinations included Fontenelle Forest, Neale Woods, DeSoto NWR, Lake Manawa and Hitchcock Nature Center.

### NOU Annual Meeting - Bellevue

	Cass	Douglas	Sarpy	Washington	Seward
Greater White-fronted Goose			x		
Snow Goose			x		
Canada Goose	x	x	x	x	
Wood Duck		x	x		
Gadwall		x	x		
American Wigeon		x			
Mallard			x		
Blue-winged Teal	x	x	x		x
Northern Shoveler		x	x		
Green-winged Teal			x		x
Canvasback			x		
Lesser Scaup			x		
Ruddy Duck			x		
Northern Bobwhite	x		x		
Ring-necked Pheasant	x		x		
Wild Turkey			x	x	
Common Loon			x		
Pied-billed Grebe		x	x		x
Horned Grebe					x
Double-crested Cormorant		x			
American White Pelican			x		
Great Blue Heron	x	x	x		
Cattle Egret					x

## NOU Annual Meeting - Bellevue

	Cass	Douglas	Sarpy	Washington	Seward
Green Heron		x	x		
White-faced Ibis			x		
Turkey Vulture	x	x	x	x	
Osprey			x		
Bald Eagle			x		
Cooper's Hawk		x	x	x	
Red-shouldered Hawk			x		
Broad-winged Hawk		x	x	x	
Red-tailed Hawk		x	x	x	
Sora			x		x
Black-bellied Plover					x
American Golden-Plover					x
Semipalmated Plover					x
Piping Plover			x		
Killdeer		x	x		x
Spotted Sandpiper			x		
Greater Yellowlegs					x
Lesser Yellowlegs			x		
Hudsonian Godwit			x		x
Ruddy Turnstone			x		x
Stilt Sandpiper					x
Sanderling			x		
Dunlin			x		x
Baird's Sandpiper			x		
Least Sandpiper			x		x
White-rumped Sandpiper			x		x
Buff-breasted Sandpiper			x		
Pectoral Sandpiper			x		x
Semipalmated Sandpiper			x		x
Short-billed Dowitcher			x		x
Long-billed Dowitcher					x
American Woodcock			x		

## NOU Annual Meeting - Bellevue

	Cass	Douglas	Sarpy	Washington	Seward
Wilson's Phalarope			x		x
Red-necked Phalarope					x
Bonaparte's Gull			x		
Franklin's Gull			x		x
Ring-billed Gull		x	x		x
Least Tern			x		
Black Tern		x	x		x
Forster's Tern		x	x		
Rock Pigeon		x	x		
Eurasian Collared-Dove			x		
Mourning Dove		x	x		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		x			
Barred Owl			x	x	
Common Nighthawk			x		
Chimney Swift	x	x	x	x	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird		x	x	x	
Belted Kingfisher			x		
Red-headed Woodpecker		x	x	x	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	x	x	x	x	
Downy Woodpecker		x	x	x	
Hairy Woodpecker		x	x	x	
Northern Flicker		x	x		
Pileated Woodpecker			x		
American Kestrel			x		
Olive-sided Flycatcher			x		
Eastern Wood-Pewee		x	x	x	
Acadian Flycatcher			x		
Alder Flycatcher			x		
Willow Flycatcher			x		
Least Flycatcher		x	x	x	
Eastern Phoebe		x	x		
Great Crested Flycatcher		x	x	x	

## NOU Annual Meeting - Bellevue

	Cass	Douglas	Sarpy	Washington	Seward
Western Kingbird			x		x
Eastern Kingbird		x	x		x
Bell's Vireo			x		
Yellow-throated Vireo	x		x		
Blue-headed Vireo		x	x	x	
Warbling Vireo	x	x	x	x	
Philadelphia Vireo			x		
Red-eyed Vireo		x	x		
Blue Jay		x	x	x	
American Crow		x	x	x	
Horned Lark			x		
Purple Martin			x		
Tree Swallow			x	x	x
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	x	x	x		
Bank Swallow			x		
Cliff Swallow		x	x		
Barn Swallow	x	x	x	x	x
Black-capped Chickadee	x	x	x	x	
Tufted Titmouse		x	x	x	
White-breasted Nuthatch		x	x	x	
Brown Creeper			x		
House Wren	x	x	x	x	
Sedge Wren			x		
Carolina Wren		x	x		
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher		x	x	x	
Eastern Bluebird		x	x	x	
Veery			x		
Gray-cheeked Thrush			x		
Swainson's Thrush		x	x	x	
Wood Thrush		x	x		
American Robin	x	x	x	x	x
Gray Catbird		x	x	x	

## NOU Annual Meeting - Bellevue

	Cass	Douglas	Sarpy	Washington	Seward
Brown Thrasher		x	x		
European Starling	x	x	x		
Cedar Waxwing		x	x		
Ovenbird		x	x	x	
Louisiana Waterthrush			x		
Northern Waterthrush		x	x		
Golden-winged Warbler			x		
Blue-winged Warbler		x			
Black-and-white Warbler		x	x	x	
Prothonotary Warbler			x		
Tennessee Warbler		x	x	x	
Orange-crowned Warbler		x	x	x	
Nashville Warbler		x	x		
Mourning Warbler			x		
Kentucky Warbler			x		
Common Yellowthroat		x	x	x	
American Redstart		x	x	x	
Cape May Warbler			x		
Cerulean Warbler			x		
Northern Parula			x		
Magnolia Warbler		x	x	x	
Bay-breasted Warbler			x		
Blackburnian Warbler			x		
Yellow Warbler		x	x	x	
Chestnut-sided Warbler		x	x	x	
Blackpoll Warbler		x	x	x	
Black-throated Blue Warbler			x	x	
Yellow-rumped Warbler		x	x	x	
Yellow-throated Warbler			x		
Black-throated Green Warbler		x			
Canada Warbler			x	x	
Wilson's Warbler		x	x		



## NOU Annual Meeting - Bellevue

	Cass	Douglas	Sarpy	Washington	Seward
Eastern Towhee		x	x	x	
Chipping Sparrow	x	x	x		
Clay-colored Sparrow		x	x		x
Field Sparrow		x	x		
Lark Sparrow		x	x		
Savannah Sparrow		x	x		
Song Sparrow			x		x
Lincoln's Sparrow			x		
White-throated Sparrow			x		
Harris's Sparrow			x		
Summer Tanager		x	x		
Scarlet Tanager		x	x	x	
Northern Cardinal		x	x	x	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	x	x	x	x	
Lazuli Bunting			x		
Indigo Bunting		x	x	x	
Dickcissel			x		
Bobolink			x		x
Red-winged Blackbird		x	x	x	x
Eastern Meadowlark			x		
Western Meadowlark			x		x
Common Grackle	x	x	x		x
Great-tailed Grackle					x
Brown-headed Cowbird		x	x	x	
Orchard Oriole	x	x	x	x	
Baltimore Oriole	x	x	x	x	x
House Finch		x	x		
American Goldfinch	x	x	x	x	
House Sparrow		x	x		x
<b>Total species: 181</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>41</b>

## In Memorium

In 2013 the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union lost three loyal members: Alice Rushton, Gertrude Wood and Mitzi Fox.

Alice Smith Rushton died in Longmont, Colorado, on Nov. 9, 2013, at age 88. She is survived by three daughters, a son and numerous grandchildren. She was born in Colorado but spent most of her adult life in the Omaha area, employed by the Bennington school system as a teacher and counselor. After retiring from teaching, she and her husband Bud traveled, and after he died, she became the church secretary at First United Methodist Church in Omaha. She was active there with visitation



Alice Rushton

programs and cancer support groups. Obviously Alice was a birder, too, and that is how we came to know her. She continued to enjoy travel, making birding trips to Canada and to New Zealand. She was a longtime NOU member and served as Secretary in 1990. She is remembered as a gentle lady who met life's problems with a positive attitude.



Gertrude Wood

Gertrude True Wood, formerly of Elmwood, died in York on June 11, 2013, at age 83. She is survived by two daughters, grandchildren and great grandchildren. She was the widow of Don Wood, with whom she shared a great interest in the history of Cass

County. Gertrude wrote and published *Lewis and Clark in Cass County* in 1996 after she and her husband spent years researching the Expedition's passage up the Missouri River and their camps in Cass County. She worked as a commercial artist and freelance writer. Gertrude also worked for a taxidermy company in the Omaha area, where her job was to make glass eyes used in the taxidermy mounts. She would go to the Henry Doorly Zoo and study the particular animal she was working on so she would get the eyes exactly right. This attention to detail carried over into her birding. She was regarded as a serious and active birder and was known for her keen eyesight and identification skills. According to the NOU website, her life list for the state is 347 species, and there are 26 counties for which her species list totals 125 or more. Most impressive, though, is her Cass County list: 294 species, a record which is likely to stand for years to come. The next best Cass County total is 211.

Mitzi Madsen Fox passed away at age 79 on July 28, 2013, in Albion, where she had lived since 1960 with her husband Jim. She and Jim raised five children in Albion, and Mitzi was active in church groups and served on the boards of the Albion Schools and the First National Bank. She helped raise money for a new swimming pool in Albion and was instrumental in the protection of the Olsen Nature Preserve north of Albion. She was on the board of the Prairie Plains

Resource Institute in Aurora. She participated in the Beaver Valley Christmas Bird Count and served as NOU Secretary from 2000 to 2004. She was known as a person who unselfishly gave her time, talent and resources to the community of Albion, never expecting any recognition for what she did. Her knowledge and interests were widely varied, and she could talk about prairie vegetation, good books to read, or New York theater as easily as she could talk about birds in her backyard.



Mitzi Fox

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